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SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

LAURA-CHAPEL, BATH,

DURING THE

SEASON OF ADVENT 1799.

BY THE

REV. FRANCIS RANDOLPH, D. D.

PREBENDARY OF BRISTOL, AND

CHAPLAIN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF YORK.

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1800.

TO HIS

ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF YORK.

SIR,

IT is not to shelter the following Discourses under the protecting influence of an illustrious name, that I dedicate them to your Royal Highness; because, whatever merit they may be thought to possess, it will only be acknowledged, in proportion as their interesting truths shall appear to be sanctioned by higher authority.

At the same time, let me own myself far from being indifferent to your Royal High-

ness's approbation of them; since, in addition to the weight of such testimony, in these times, in favour of Religion, when all earthly possessions are shrinking from the grasp, when every decorating splendour of this life is fading away, they will have furnished reflections to render peaceful its awful close, and, perhaps, perpetuate in your Royal Highness's memory an esteem for him, who, with pride and gratitude, subscribes himself

Your most faithful

And obliged humble servant,

F. RANDOLPH.

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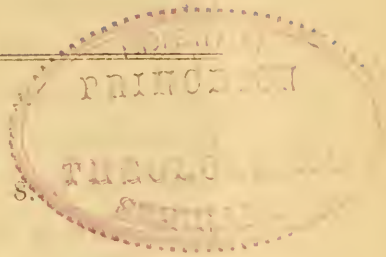
SERMON I.



HEBREWS XIII. 8.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

NOTHING has done more harm to the cause of Christianity, or furnished stronger materials of objection to the opposer of its faith and doctrines, than representing it as of late original; as a scheme of religion entirely new, and never revealed to mankind till about four thousand years after the creation.

Hence it has happened, that amidst the variety of religious systems, each claiming a divine original, the infidel has classed the christian with other impostures of the day; or allowing, the rational and practical influence of

religion in general, as derived from GOD's universal law of nature, has disdained to confine it within the ceremonies, or to make it favour the pretensions, of this or that particular church or nation. And hence also, many, who profess and call themselves christians, from neglecting to investigate the evidence of the covenant which was from everlasting, and only ratified at the advent of that Saviour, who from the very fall of man stood forth his intercessor, impeach the unity of GOD's all-merciful design, darken the prospect of universal redemption, abridge the promised benefits of the Gospel, and shut on preceding ages those gates of mercy, which they yet consider as open to themselves.

By those, however, who diligently search the scriptures, and thence deduce their belief, a very different doctrine will be maintained.—Holding fast by one unbroken chain of evidence, they mark and acknowledge the antiquity of the faith in the common Redeemer of all mankind. By extending his atonement to ages that are past, they exalt the dignity, they enlarge the efficacy, of the great Propitiation for

our sins. By contending for a retrospect to the doctrines and sanctions of christianity, they consequently maintain, that the light of life has dispelled that ignorance which must otherwise have enveloped the world, for more than two-thirds of the time of its existence;—they unite the promise with the performance, the prophecy with the completion, the anticipation with the event;—they behold the elders (though not in possession of the promises which were yet afar off) preferring the reproach of Christ to every temporal enjoyment; they see them contemplating the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;—they do not barely affirm that God bore testimony to his proposed redemption, but that through his Holy Spirit that testimony was received; that he gave faith (without which it is impossible to please God) to justify, and hope to console, his chosen servants, till the appointed manifestation of the great Author and Finisher of that faith should be made to the subjects of his universal redemption.

In this do all the prophets agree; and throughout the whole of this epistle, a continued succession of witnesses, with an in-

spired collection of authentic testimonies from the scriptures of the Old Testament, concur in asserting an uniformity of belief in the nature, and of hope in the coming, of a promised Deliverer. Under the warrant, therefore, of such authority, we may surely consider the defenders of opposite opinions as the *propounders of strange doctrines;* of doctrines, that would separate the branch of righteousness from its parent stock, and disjoin the evangelical blessings from every former act of GOD's interfering providence for the happiness of his people.

The sum and substance of the Apostle's reasoning upon the proposition before us is, that the faith which he exhorts the Hebrew believers to keep whole and undefiled, has been one and the same in all ages of the church; that it was no variable thing, either in itself, or in its effects, but immutable, as the Divine Mediator, whose religion it is. *Remember them*, says St. Paul, *which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of GOD, whose faith follow—considering the end of their conversation—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.* That is, the one redeeming

Saviour, of whom, the promise, the performance, and the perpetual administration of the Holy Spirit, conspire to testify in due proportion to the past, the present, and the ages that are to come. For on the Patriarch, the true Israelite, and the faithful Christian, one light has invariably shone, though with different lustre; and the GOD of mercy and love bade sinful man look forward to his covenanted restoration, from the promise in the garden of Eden, to the confirmation of every assurance, *when the hour of his judgment is come.*

Our endeavours will be to establish this important truth, and the course of our enquiry will necessarily carry us through a wide field of discussion. We trust, however, in the extensive survey to discover the path of life; and should we from our christian eminence look down upon the subsisting traces of the Patriarchal and the Jewish churches, all pursuing the same road, all leading to the same end;—should we, in the wildest digressions of heathen mythology, be able to measure back the wandering footsteps of idolatry to the very point of departure from the true faith; and to pick out,

from the tenets and precepts of pagan philosophy, authentic vouchers of the existing hope and promise of a *Redeemer mighty to save;*—we shall then not only behold the glorious, but the uniform design of the Gospel institution; we shall shew forth a Saviour's love upholding fallen man, and recovering his faded dignity; we shall exhibit Christianity as it is—the triumph of grace over sin and death, the fruit of the seed that was to bruise the Serpent's head; we shall welcome with more abundant gratitude the glad tidings of joy, which ushered in a Saviour's birth, who came to ratify man's primæval assurance of pardon, to complete his promised restoration to his forfeited inheritance, to confirm his justification unto holiness, and his resurrection unto life eternal.

Previously, however, and as a sort of preparatory introduction to those scriptural proofs, which I mean to produce in a series of declarations and promises through the several periods and families of God's church, let me be allowed to trace out a general line of argument, which hereafter may be examined with more minuteness of investigation. The farther such

enquiries go, the more firmly will our faith be established; and each step affording some characteristic evidence of the Apostle's assertion, we shall be conducted along the ways of GOD's righteous providence, every where collecting arms for the christian warrior to repel the attacks of the infidel, and exposing the temporizing soldier, who pretends to fight under the banners of the cross.

The first revelation made to Adam, after his fall, was a promise of redemption; and this appears to have been connected with a typical ordinance, to preserve a prospect of acceptance resulting from the shedding of blood. For though we do not read the injunction, we learn the respect that the Almighty shewed to the sacrifice of Abel, which exactly coincided with that which he afterwards required in the institution of the Mosaic ritual. That this revelation continued in force through all the antediluvian ages of the world, we may infer from the righteousness of Noah who walked with GOD; and who was therefore saved, when a defection from the faith had *filled the earth with violence*, and in consequence of their guilt,

an insulted Creator destroyed the whole race of man *from off the face of it.*

The acceptance of Abel's sacrifice not having been signified by any temporal blessing, but on the contrary, followed by an immediate and violent death, must necessarily lead to an inference, that it promised a blessing to arise from the archetype of the victim, in a life of which the body and blood of Jesus Christ was to be the purchase. It was by faith he offered it; it was by faith that Enoch was translated, and that Noah became heir of the righteousness that is by faith. That the sacrifice, therefore, which he offered on his coming forth from the ark, had in contemplation the object of that faith, is an indisputable consequence. From Noah, then, a testimony to the hope which was communicated to him by God, and a sacramental mode of anticipating its object, were exhibited to the few who survived the flood.

The transmittal from the original communication to the reviving world is thus made perfect; but however the ceremonial form might have been retained, the spirit of it soon departed, and we find the faith of their fathers

abandoned in a very short time by the progeny of Noah. Exalting himself against GOD, who was still testified by his revelation, man again incurs his hot displeasure. Confusion of tongues, and consequently the dissolution and dispersion of all subsisting society, was the sentence pronounced against him at Babel, when the Almighty *scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

As all came under this penalty, there was no preacher of righteousness to restore the faith, and accordingly we behold the prevalence of idolatry in all the recorded nations of the earth. In consequence, however, of adhering to the statutes and laws of his GOD, and of preserving the purity of primæval theology, and the spiritual meaning of sacrifice, amidst the corrupted rites and offerings that ignorance of the truth had now grafted on superstitious dread, we observe Abraham called out of his own country, and from among his own kindred—made the object of GOD's favour and adoption—and separated, for the work of righteousness, from the rest of mankind, who were given up to the vanity of their own imaginations.

Again, when the direct interposition of God was evinced by miracles to Egypt, and the people of God were preserved with Moses, the Egyptians were punished in the most exemplary manner; their unbelief drew down a penalty connected with their offence.

The generation which followed Moses, tho' they ate of the passover, yet lapsed from the faith that was thus again revealed to them; they were, therefore, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, doomed to perish in the wilderness for their apostacy and rebellion.

While the temple yet stood, a type of an expected redemption, the Jews departed from the creed of their fathers; they were also given up to their enemies, and carried into a penal captivity.

Our Lord himself *came to his own, but his own received him not.* The issue is sufficiently known. There is therefore, in all the degrees of evidence afforded to mankind, no intimation given to which we may not attach a faith that will justify, or a denial that will condemn. And if, with the full concentred light of his Holy Gospel now shining forth, we yet depart

from the ways which it renders thus clear before us, why should we expect an exemption from the indignation of God, or that he will not withdraw the profferred guidance of his hand?

Upon this foundation are all our proofs to stand; and though to the candid enquirer we might fairly put the question, what becomes of the Patriarchal, if it be separated from the Mosaic? or of the Mosaic, if it be separated from the Christian dispensation? yet we are desirous rather of bringing confirmation to the truth of our position, from the progressive periods of their history, from the memorials of heathen nations, the dispersion of the Jews, and the apostacy of the present times. We wish to shew, that by considering the religion and the ritual of the patriarchs and the Israelites only as separate forms of national theology, and not materially connected with the Christian creed, the peculiar advantage of sacred history which records and points to Christ, as the guide and saviour of man, is relinquished, and that in attempting to explain his own nature and destination, he has either wandered into conjecture, or reposed in infidelity.

With a present sense, and a melancholy foreboding of their fatal consequences, we appeal to many an highly-esteemed publication to substantiate these assertions. And from studies which might adorn, but should not be made the basis, of a christian education, what evils have originated in a christian land, for which the most extensive learning never can compensate! How many, from a classical or scientific direction of their talents, have brought to the prophetic writings only a critical acuteness to decide upon their respective merits, or a disposition to search after that sort of demonstration, which the oracles of God could not afford, without destroying at once the faith and free agency of man! Such enquirers after truth will find little there of Christ or his gospel. In the works of genius, in the fictions of imagination, in abstract speculation, or in experimental discovery, in short in every arrangement of the materials before them, because it appears as it were the work of man's own creation, such students will derive a gratification more congenial to the pride of intellect, to their literary attainments, and to their habits of reflection,

In the progress of talents thus directed, would to GOD that religion had only to weep over their useless employment! but it has had to sustain their wanton and determined attacks. From the boldness of infidelity, that would dispute the authority of the holy writings, to the cavils of sophistry that would weaken their sanctions, every thing has been attempted that the vigour or acuteness of the human mind could atchieve; and *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* has been stigmatized as an impostor, ridiculed as an enthusiast, denied the evidence of miracles, and robbed of every ornament and of every pre-eminence of character.

It seems, indeed, to have been reserved for this enlightened age to oppose with more decided malignity the revelation of Jesus Christ; with an awful warning to the wisdom of this world, we have seen men plunge from doubts, which questioned the validity of GOD's word, to the madness of impiety that denies his existence. But the judgments which have followed, and the crimes and horrors which now desolate the earth, bring the most indisputable

marks of the hand that directs the moral like the natural hurricane to its ordained purpose; of the hand of Him who is pledged to maintain the cause of righteousness, who has ever avenged his violated laws, and who, to punish and correct mankind, is now making an apostate world the engine of its own destruction.

To the maturing scheme of prophecy preordained and foretold by the *faithful witness*, the christian looks with confidence, but rests in hope. Waiting, like the patriarch, for the fullness of consummation and the promised rest, he may mistake the increasing light for the brightness of the perfect day; yet in its progress onwards, as it must shine with clearer lustre, he will follow it as a guide amidst the darkness of events, and as the day-star that is to lead him to the GOD of his salvation. Whatever seal may now be opened, whatever vial of wrath may now be pouring forth, he will not rashly decide; but directed by the word of Him *who was, and is, and is to come*, he will discover in the signs of the times something like the approach of that dreadful period, when the measure of iniquity is to be full, and when the Son of

Man at his second advent shall *hardly find faith upon the earth.* He may, perhaps, so far presume to remove the veil that hangs between him and futurity, as to disclose, under the symbol of the *beast that was to ascend out of the bottomless pit,* the spirit of antichrist under its last terrific form; that *was not only to speak as a dragon,* to change *times and laws,* to have its mouth full of cursing and bitterness, and its feet swift *to shed blood,* but was to trample under foot *the two witnesses of Jesus,* to insult *their memories,* and to rejoice in their destruction. Whether or not this part of the prophetic vision be now realised, and a tyrannical and ferocious government be allowed to identify the features of the hideous monster;—whether or not a rejection of the Old and New Testament, (the witnesses of Jesus) a change of times and ordinances, and the senseless admiration of deluded nations, be admitted as an interpretation of the symbolic language, and explain the apostolic picture of all men wondering after the beast, and worshipping his power;—certain it is, that new scenes are unfolding themselves in the great system of Providence, and that they are acting

upon the theatre of man's redemption. Certain it is, that He who is *the way, and the truth, and the life, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* is hastening to its accomplishment that promised period, when *the seed of the woman shall finally bruise the serpent's head, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of our Christ.*

From corruptions which polluted, and from superstition which disgraced, the altars of religion, from the purgatory of priestcraft, and from the intercession of saints, it was natural for the reflecting mind to revolt; and the pointed ridicule that exposed, as well as the serious argument that refuted, found admirers and patrons among all who felt for the dignity of God's sanctuary, and for the simplicity of his holy worship. But a confutation of error which alone engaged the hearts and thoughts of the wise and good, soon became a mischievous weapon against the truth in the hands of the infidel and profligate. The removal of prejudices masked their hostility to all belief, the defects of one part of Christ's church disguised their plan of compleating its total destruction, and

under the pretence of purifying the stream of Christianity, they were in reality employed in efforts to cut off its source, and dry up the fountain head.

Wise in their generation, they knew that the instrument must be fitted to its work; that man's social duties were interwoven in his very nature; and that to overturn and to destroy, would not be effected by a momentary delirium, or through a series of unconnected acts. They knew, that human reason must first shake off all dependance upon religion, and human weakness be deprived of its support and consolation; and then, as it has too fatally proved, the rampart opposed to his passions being broken down, that man would be ready to enter at the breach, with a ferocity suited to his frightful transformation.

What might have been matter of opinion, is in these our days confirmed by facts. A systematic conspiracy against the religion of Christ, subtle in its operations, and determined in its object, has been unfolded to us with all its horrid testimony. And when we behold a ci-

vilized and courteous nation changed of a sudden into a mass of murderous plunderers; when we behold a people, once polished in their habits, and gentle in their manners, breaking down every fence of decency, and sweeping away with infuriate barbarity the affections and the charities of social life; it is only from such testimony, that we can account for this wild waste of happiness; it is from such testimony, and from the punishment that has followed those who boast a freedom from superstitious bondage, that we ought to be taught the value of Christian dependance. And though, without any presumptuous decision, it may be affirmed, that *tribulation is come upon the earth*, that *men's hearts are failing them for fear*, and that *many false prophets have arisen, and deceived many;* yet are we assured, that amidst the darkness of the perilous storm, there is a light sown for the righteous; and that He, who is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, will cause the very wrath of men to praise him—will, in due time, make manifest the ways of Providence, and shew the wicked ensnared in the traps they had laid for others.

From the progress of crime, and from the picture of misery, we willingly turn to scenes of milder aspect—to a country of Christian hope, and hitherto protected by a Saviour's love. But even in the British soil the seed of infidelity has fixed its root, and is now spreading wide its poisonous plants in all directions.

To the daring spirit of avowed atheism our minds are not yet tempered; but the alarming popularity of writings, which have nothing to recommend them, but the rant of blasphemy, the disturbance of established order, and the defiance of all authority, human and divine, are among symptoms that portend a defection from Christ, rather than a long-suffering for his faith. Issuing from the same licentious school, how many teachers, with an insolent tenderness for the public welfare, have stepped forth to instruct us! Our shelves are crowded with pretended discoveries in nature, to falsify the work of God, and the history of his creation. We have systems of morality, patched together from broken fragments of revelation, to disprove the exercise of God's will, or the necessity of his law; and we have essays on man's

origin and progress, which take him out of the hands of his Creator, and leave him to mould the form, and to compleat the sum, of his own happiness. Instead of asking of the days that are past to teach us wisdom, we seek for it in a speculative discussion, or in a partial experiment; and humility, the key that would open the treasures of eternal life, is buried under the rubbish of philosophic pride and delusive theory. Thus the brightest talents have been led into error, have opposed probabilities to the sure word of GOD, and denied demonstration, in order to avoid belief.

Baneful, however, as these fruits have proved, they are happily placed beyond the reach of many; but the branches that bear them, are of wide extent and abundant produce; and the crafty enemy of the human race is every where, and in every shape, aiding and tempting the unwise to pluck and eat. I advert to those loose and licentious publications, which, making the feelings a pander to the passions, dissolve the force of every moral precept, and extract the sting of guilt from every known sin; or which, quieting the fears of man by appealing to the

mercy and goodness of God, dispose at will of his justice and indignation. I advert to that fatal curiosity, which, with the genius of a neighbouring country, has imported a wildness of imagination, that despises sober restraint; a fictitious morality, that degrades religion; and abandoned principles, that pollute common life. I advert to those dramatic representations, which, by bestowing on vice the attractions of virtue, and through the recommendatory splendour of some popular qualities, bribe the integrity of the judgment, in its decision on the worst of conduct and the basest of characters. And when (to resume our metaphor) these are branches of the same fatal tree, which has been planted on the ruins of kingdoms, and watered with the blood of their inhabitants, is it *a tree to be desired to make one wise?* Is it a time to see it naturalized in our English soil? Is it a time to be silent, when so many thoughtless beings are aiding its growth, and grafting its pernicious scions on the fairest shoots in the christian vineyard.

In this state of things, (for it ill becomes us to look back on the calamities which the ini-

quity of man has ever produced, without any self-application; or as servants of GOD, to arraign the impiety and enormities of others, without any national charge, or accusation against ourselves) in this state of things—not drawn, I trust, in the spirit of censure; not trespassing even beyond the bounds of common observation—what have we to oppose to the delusions of this world, but the testimony of GOD, the evidences afforded to the unalterable design and purpose of its great Creator? What stop can we hope to put to the frantic experiments and wild machinations of human policy, but the voice of Him who to the passions, as well as to the elements, can say, *Peace, be still?* who, from the beginning hath made bare his arm in the eyes of all nations, and *travelling in the greatness of his strength*, hath trodden down the people in his anger; who, arrayed in the splendour of that glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, wielding the arms, and invested with all the titles, of Omnipotence, is represented as weighing the earth in his balance, as upholding the cause of righteousness, and vindicating by his

judgments, and protecting by his mercy, the *honour due unto his name.* The sound is gone forth into all nations, *thy salvation is near;* and like the shepherds of old, we, upon whom the glory of the Lord has shone, are now travelling onwards in faith to see this thing which is come to pass; to learn the mystery which the Lord hath made known to us, of GOD in Christ reconciling the world to himself, of Christ in the Father, and the Father in Him. It is the Lord, who in the garden gave comfort to the guilty progenitors in whom we fell; it is the Angel of the old covenant whom we are now going to meet, as the messenger of the new; it is the JEHOVAH of Israel, as we trust to prove, whom we are approaching to worship as the incarnate Son of GOD; it is the Lord of Hosts, whom we are to welcome as the Prince of Peace, and who, at the head of his faithful Israel, redeemed out of all kindreds, tongues, and nations, is again to appear as their everlasting Deliverer, the King of Glory; it is, in short, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* who came to visit us in great humility; not the son of Joseph and Mary, but

He, whom all the Angels of God were to worship; not a Prophet sent from God, but the everlasting Counsellor; not a pre-existent spirit descended from Heaven to proclaim the truths of the Gospel, but the eternal Mediator, for ever promised to, and for ever looked for, by the faithful; in whom they waited for that glorious consummation foretold in him, *behold thy salvation cometh;* in whom they expected that great and atoning Saviour, whose consoling voice had uttered, *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*

The evidences of this important truth we mean to make, during the ensuing Sundays of Advent, the subject of our meditation; to concentrate every name by which our Redeemer has been called, every appellation by which He has been known to his people; every relation in which He stands to them, in that comprehensive and endearing one, *the Lord our righteousness.* That these evidences may be found, and that they will be produced against the scoffers of his word and the debasers of his character, we have many an apostolic affirmation, many a declaration of inspired history.

What is the language of St. Peter? *Repent ye, therefore,* says he, *and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come, from the presence of the Lord.* And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, *whom the heaven must receive, until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of his prophets, since the world began.* In the same strain, and with the same decision as to the nature and object of faith, the Apostle also, in this Epistle to the Hebrews, sets forth the efficacy of it as a principle of religious action, and illustrates it in many cases of pure, unshaken, suffering, and triumphant faith, from Abel (the son of Adam) to the time of the Maccabees. And after a continued series of facts, deduced in regular order, both before the law and under the law, concludes with this direct assurance—*All having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us might not be made perfect;* that is, they relied on the promise, but this promise was given only in, and thro' the seed, that was to come, which seed, the Apostle says, was Christ.

We shall not now detail proofs which may appear more forcible and more satisfactory in their collective form, under the different dispensations of Almighty love; but I should very imperfectly discharge the duties of a christian pastor, if, whilst endeavouring to raise your conceptions to the Author of your faith, I should forbear impressing on your hearts, its necessary and correspondent consequences. If our blessed Lord was announced to our first parents; if from time to time, through the long series of the Mosaic and prophetic days, the opening beams of this Sun of Righteousness broke through the cloud under which they were obscured, lighting up the countenances, and gladdening the hearts, of those who were called the servants of GOD; what ought a Christian to feel at the full manifestation of his Redeemer's glory? Witness as he is made to all these miracles of mercy, well might the Apostle exclaim, *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Christ has, indeed, shone forth a light to them who sat in darkness; has been announced as a Saviour for sinners—but for penitent and believing sinners. The terms of his covenant are, *Repent and*

be forgiven. It was the language of the Evangelical prophet; it was the Baptist's preparatory injunction; it was our Lord's original lesson, *Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; it was (as we have before observed) the Holy Apostle St. Peter's opening of his ministry, *Repent ye, and be converted.* This was to be the issue of early predictions, of patriarchal promises, of Mosaic rites, of prophetic warnings, of christian miracles. The design and end of all this splendid apparatus was, that repentance, and remission of sins, should be preached to all nations. Let it not also be forgotten by a Christian people, that blest as they are with peculiar privileges, they are loaded with more than common responsibility. Why were Chorazim, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, threatened with a doom more dreadful than that even of Sodom and Gomorrah? but because, though so many mighty works had been done among them, they repented not; because they were blind to Him, whom we profess to see; because they disregarded Him, whom we profess to adore.

Let us all, then, lay these things seriously to heart; let us all ask ourselves that most impor-

tant question, each for himself, Have I repented? do I bring forth fruits meet for repentance, the only sure evidence of my pardon being sealed? If not, while Christ, who descended from his glory as the mediator of a new covenant, still sits upon a throne of mercy, let us fall down before him, confessing our sins, and imploring forgiveness and acceptance for his sake. Let us pray for the spirit of GOD, to soften our hearts, to render our contrition more deep, our vows of obedience more sincere, our resolutions of amendment more efficacious. Thus invigorated, and thus consoled, the believer may go forth, and tell with joy the glad tidings of his salvation. He may speak with confidence of all the gracious promises, of his inheritance with Christ, and of *the kingdom prepared for him before the foundation of the world.* In past transactions and fulfilments, in visibles and invisibles, in prospect and in prophecy, looking to one Saviour, and to the final consummation of everlasting love, his song will be that of Moses and the Lamb, and the burden of it, *Who is like unto thee, O JEHOVAH, amongst all the mighty ones? Who is like unto thee, glorious in*

holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou in thy mercy hast led forth from the world the people whom thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation.

He may cry out with Christian exultation, *this is our* GOD, *we have waited for him, and He will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.* Amen, Amen.

SERMON II.

GENESIS XXVI. 5.

Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

AT the head of what is commonly called the Patriarchal Dispensation, and descended from the family of Him, on whom the promised blessing was entailed, by his Father's prophecy, stands this revered founder of the Jewish nation—the pattern of obedience, which is by faith, the instrument of mercy, the instructor of ages, the friend of GOD. The incidents of such a life, as might be expected, exhibit various and visible interpositions of divine Providence; while every expression of favour, and every communication of grace, confirming past promises, af-

ford a clear intimation of the counsel of GOD, a stronger pledge of the immutability of his holy purpose, towards all the families of the earth, thro' the mediation of an heavenly Redeemer.

In the memorials of this illustrious character, we not only find the promise made to Adam, the declaration continued to Noah, ratified by an everlasting covenant, but temporal blessings held out to the Patriarch's posterity, with the assurance of everlasting possession; terms, therefore, which never could apply to a finite accomplishment, terms which never could be fulfilled in an earthly Canaan, must be allowed to disclose some farther design, and to point to some future inheritance. And the blessing pronounced, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, and which still awaits completion in an heavenly city, through Him who *is to bring the glory and honour of the nations into it* was a more distinct revelation of that merciful love, which, fore-ordained in the heavenly council for man's salvation, was to be exemplified in the person of Him, whom in our former discourse we brought before you, as *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

To the heavenly attestation of our text, *Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws*; we may add a similar, though subsequent, testimony and explanation, of what that charge, and what those commandments, were. With the view of enforcing conviction on the unbelieving Jews, or of reprobating their departure from the faith of their ancestors, our Saviour says to them, your *father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad*; thus pronouncing Himself to have been the object of hope and dependence to their venerable progenitor, and claiming from his posterity (as being heirs of the promise) an acquiescence in the same belief; appealing to a prior testimony, and to the faithfulness of GOD's word, in favour of their expected Messiah, and then assuming into such expectation all the properties of inherent divinity; and finally, that nothing might be left to doubt, or subject to misconstruction, with an assertion they could not, and which they did not, mistake, as Lord of the universe, as guardian GOD of the Jews, He marks Himself with the signature of

uncreated and continued existence, and tells them, *before Abraham was, I am.*

Independent, however, of every extraneous illustration, we might fairly argue the point, on its own internal evidence. Abraham's justification unto holiness is expressly referred to his obedience (through faith) to the commandments, to the statutes, and to the laws of his GOD. Had these particulars been recorded of any one, under either of the succeeding dispensations, would they not have been received, as comprehending the whole of religion? If by the commandments of GOD we are taught to understand his moral precepts, by his statutes, the institutions and ordinances of his worship, and by the laws, his judiciary directions and appointments; the received and usual mode of interpretation must be abandoned, or the substance of the Patriarch's faith will exemplify a religion, complete in all its parts.

Again:—If GOD lay claim to the several parts of it, by stiling them, as we have heard, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws, both the injunctions, the promises, and the doctrines of revelation, must have ceased with Abraham;

or the nations of the earth, which were to be blessed through him, must have acknowledged their divine origin, and regarded them as marks of direction to a Redeemer's advent, and to a brighter and more perfect dispensation.

But from arguments, which some might think defective, and from applications, which, thus generally taken, others might deem irreconcileable with the nature of the evidence, let us turn to those scriptures, to which our Saviour himself appeals, as testifying of Him; let us follow the voice, that appalled and consoled our first parents in the garden of Eden, to its more dreadful and terrific sound on Mount Sinai, when each preceding covenant was attested and renewed, under more strict observances, and with severer discipline.

Upon this hallowed ground, the first on which our Redeemer stood, it is painful to see so many of those, who call themselves christians, refuse to tread. That the infidel, who disdains to contemplate the completed work of redemption, should be tempted to examine any part of its divine materials; or that the natural man, who confides in his own strength, should be made

sensible of his lost and helpless state, from the fall of his first parents, is not to be expected. To the one, who braves the destruction, or who feels not the enormity of sin, we should but ill address the merit and the necessity of an atonement for it; to the other, who trusts in his own righteousness, we should urge, with as little avail, the insufficiency of his pretensions, without the efficacy of redeeming love. But it is not against the objections or the doubts of infidelity, that the believer is called upon for any vindication. From these he may retire with pity or abhorrence; or if he must answer, it may be in the sure and certain word of GOD, already delivered to the faithful, and to the faithful only now again to be delivered, as a warning against the subtlety of worldly wisdom—*Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn,* says the Prophet, *and the hole of the pit, whence ye are digged; look unto Abraham your Father, and unto Sarah that bore you. For I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him; and fear ye not, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. For*

the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them up like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation. But when he sees this strong post of Christianity neglected, or given up, by those who are pledged to maintain her cause; when he sees those, to whose protection the fortress of truth is entrusted, abandoning its outworks and weakening its defence, is it not his duty to sound the alarm? or shall he scruple to call it desertion in the soldier of Christ, to leave the citadel thus exposed to the nearer approach of the enemy.

If Christianity be true, it is true in every part, and in every period of time; the creation, the redemption, the sanctification of man, all began together in the Almighty councils, and all move on in divine procession, the distinct, but co-ordinate, the peculiar, though confederate, offices of the same great and glorious Being. And if its heavenly Author be the end of all the law and the prophets; if the testimony of Jesus be the spirit of prophecy, such testimony, must have been the leading object of every preceding revelation. Amidst a contempt of his

miracles, and a disavowal of accomplished predictions, in what manner does our blessed Lord assert the dignity of his character in the face of his enemies? He appeals to their acknowledged leader, and favourite of GOD, in direct evidence against them. *Do not think*, says he, *that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words.*

The condemnation of the Jew, like that of the Christian, proceeds upon the same sufficiency of evidence; he was to be judged by the *word that was spoken*, and he must either reject his Law-giver, or receive a Saviour, of whom Moses was both type and prophet. Thus grounding the necessity of their belief in him on the very records of their faith, and establishing his authority upon that of their own religious credentials, Christ at once confirms the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and incorporates, as it were, every preceding dispensation into one system of redeeming love. What language could have spoken so plainly of Him, (that mis-

take was made a crime) but the language of inspiration? How could he have appealed to any anterior testimony, unless that testimony had been known to have been of divine origin?

Instructed also in the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, if Moses were ordained to be the instrument of the promised deliverance to his brethren; if, in the progress of his commission, he were allowed to pre-figure, and to predict a more perfect deliverance, through a prophet that was to be raised up like unto him; and if, moreover, almost every act of their legislation and worship be found commemorative of such expectation, and subsidiary to this gracious design, then of what comment will the Mosaic history admit? Descriptive as it is of the works and the ways of Providence, the truths it reveals, and the events it foretels, could not be discovered by human means: nor can it be supposed, that the Being, who must have dictated the word of prophecy, and whose name was to be honoured and proclaimed in the fulfilment of it, should suffer the operations of his hands to be disfigured or disgraced by fabulous legends or fanciful representations.

The legislative and the prophetic annals of this inspired writer even now specify and distinguish the Jewish people. Without a vestige of civil polity left, and scattered as they are among all nations, they still guard them as memorials of their principal ancestors, as a code of laws to direct their practice, and as containing the promised advent of one who *shall redeem Israel.* What, then, does the Christian understand, when he reads of the *veil being still upon their hearts?* Will he urge against them the predictive testimony, and refuse the descriptive evidence of inspiration? Will he allow their scriptures to bear witness of Jesus, and the redemption of mankind through him, and doubt their veracity, when they prove the necessity of this rich display of mercy, by bearing witness also of the fall of man, and the state from which he fell? Man never had but one teacher, though he may have submitted to many masters; from the natural world he was to be led to the spiritual, from visibles to invisibles; and the knowledge of the true GOD is involved in the knowledge of the works of his creation. Without the Mosaic basis, what vi-

sionary superstructures have been raised by many who would build up to heaven, but they have been gazed at and admired, and then tumbled into ruin, each in his turn, for want of a foundation. Had we not been accustomed to concede too much to the powers of human reason, we should have learnt, that divine architecture needed the explanation of its divine architect; we should have found the inspired author of the Pentateuch to be the most faithful historian, the wisest of legislators, and the soundest philosopher. Nay, we venture to assert, upon the most satisfactory proofs, that in proportion as discovery has taken place of conjecture, and experiment filled up the void of theory, the grand and awful scene of creation, as exhibited to our view in the first chapter of Genesis, accords with the known principles of material agency, and disposes of the elements in a manner consistent with their visible and immediate properties.

But to quit the subject of Moses, till he appears as the leader and law-giver of Israel, we will now return to the eventful records of the patriarchal dispensation. In the earliest, and

what is called the antediluvian, period of it, they are but few, and these not pursued into any minute particulars; the inspired historian seems hastening to that important era, when the separation from idolatry began in the faithful founder of his nation, and was continued and preserved in his descendants, through a series of miraculous interpositions, till the partition wall was enlarged and secured by the religious observances of a whole people, and the ritual ceremonies of the Jewish church.

But what is wanting in historical detail, is amply supplied by the precision and importance of the events related. We are shewn the world in its glory, as it was formed by the great Creator, and man placed in it, in his primæval beauty of innocence and conscious dependence. The picture soon changes—and seduced from his faith and dependence, we see him driven from the blissful scenes of paradise, delivered over to sin and death, and robbed of immortality.

Without dwelling upon the conditional prohibition, without entering into any examination of the Tree of Life as a sacramental pledge, or of the Cherubim that was appointed to guard

it, (though both must have a spiritual meaning, from being made the emblem of mercy, and the end of atonement) we will take up man from his wretched and helpless state, and put him into the hands of Him who interposed for his deliverance. But we would impress it strongly on the hearts of all, that the fruit of the tree of life is no longer within human reach, and that it can no more be eaten, but through the gift of Him, who came down from heaven to preserve the spiritual food, to prove himself the substance of this sacred figure, and to give life to the world. *To him that overcometh*, says our Saviour, in the same figurative language, *will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of* GOD.

The plan of restoration was no sooner revealed to our first parents, under the emblem of the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head, than it was accompanied with institutions and ordinances, symbolical of the event, and intended to perpetuate the memory of it. The nearer we keep to Adam, this promise of a second Adam, perfect and sinless, to stand before GOD, appears to be the constant

object of hope, and the subject of meditation. When Cain was born unto Eve, what was her reflection, *I have gotten a man from the Lord;* after he had killed his brother, and was driven from the presence of the Lord, her next offspring she calls Seth, *because*, said she, *God has appointed me another seed.* Thus keeping in view the promise made to her, and transmitting to her children the glorious inheritance to be derived through her.

The perpetration also of the horrid crime, the first entry of death into the world, furnishes questions that it would be hard to answer, but upon the supposition of such expected blessing. And the death of Abel, in its cause and consequences, brings a considerable accession of evidence to prove a believed inheritance beyond the grave, and the faith and worship of Him, by whose triumph over death it was to be secured.

Unless a resurrection unto life eternal had been specified, the loss of one child, thus cut off from every share of the promised restoration, could not have been compensated to the repentant mother by the birth of another.

Moreover, if Cain's hatred were heightened into revenge, from the signified rejection of his peace-offering, and the acceptance of his brother Abel's, there must have been some ordained mode of worship, some commemorative reference, necessary to be observed in the sacred office. Both sacrificed to their Creator; but the one, with a piety that looked to the recovery of what he had lost—the other, with a self-sufficiency that claimed as a right, what was to be a pure gift of grace and favour. Thus made to feel his inferiority and dependence, and sharpened into resentment by the dread of being supplanted in his birthright, Cain listens to the same wicked counsels, that had ruined his unhappy parent—that he was master of his own destiny, that the blessing belonged to him, and that GOD could not deprive him of it, without an act of injustice; but to frustrate any such intention, he had only to destroy his brother, and thus secure possession. The fatal purpose was resolved upon and executed.—And if by faith, as the Apostle argues, Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; if he obtained witness that he was

righteous, GOD testifying of his gifts, and by it hebeing dead yet speaketh; then the crime by which he fell, is an illustration of the great doctrines of the gospel—of the corruption of man's nature, the necessity of a Saviour, and the merit of his atonement; and it speaks aloud to many an unhallowed sacrifice of the present day, that the prayer which is not offered through an interceding Redeemer, will, like the sacrifice of the rejected Cain, want its essential and propitiatory form.

From the opposer of original sin, and from the presumptuous derider of atonement, we would also ask some reasonable solution of the origin of sacrifice. Will they make it consistent with any natural idea, will they discover in the blood of an innocent victim any thing recommendatory in itself of the offerer's suit and devotions? And though they should clear away, what they term, a load of superstition from the Christian worship, they will find it incumbring every altar of their favourite natural religion; they will find these absurdities forming the significant, and generally indispensible, part of all religious ceremonies; and how-

ever disgraced, as we are ready to allow, with every abominable pollution, though retaining nothing to perfect the service, or to purify the offering, still in its expiatory form, in its propitiatory hopes, the sacrifice of heathen nations preserves the features of that sacred and solemn office, which was ordained to keep up the remembrance of guilt, till the full and perfect sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, was made by an eternal Mediator for the sins of the whole world.

If we except the translation of Enoch, and which seems to have been designed by the Almighty to continue and confirm to the righteous family the assurance of a happier state—*Enoch walked with* God, *and was not, for* God *took him*—there is little else left to characterize the servants of God, till the day arrives when Noah was to enter into the ark. Then, though the pillars of the earth were shaken from their foundation, and its apostate and rebellious inhabitants were swept away from the face of it by a deluge of waters, the building of God, the work of redemption, was not overthrown; and the church of the Redeemer, now confined

to eight persons, sailed over the ruins of a world—unhurt.

There is something so awful in this universal judgment, it speaks at every period of time with such terrific warning to a dissolute and corrupt generation, and it ought to awaken in a Christian bosom so many reflections on as sure a destruction to overwhelm him, and the world on which he treads, without the deliverance wrought for the faithful by the spiritual Noah in the ark of his church, that we shall reserve the comparison for a future and particular illustration.

To the exceptions that may be made to the Mosaic account of the deluge, we can oppose the present state of the earth, with its manifold evidences of the wonderful transaction. And what has been the grand epoch of every ancient kingdom; an event, that has been admitted as true by every nation, whose monuments are preserved, or whose writings are accessible; an event, which has given to symbol a character, and to allegory a meaning; which, divesting mythology of her ornaments, and chronology of its errors, can furnish to every people a real

memorial of their descent and origin, combines the religion, the manners, laws, arts, and antiquities of every country against the mere assertions of infidelity.

Placed again upon a new world, and feeling for those who had perished in their iniquities, Noah begins the renewed duties of life with an act of worship to his merciful preserver. *He built an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings unto the Lord.* Here we have again the same commemorative sacrifice, as the result of faith and dependence; there was no immediate communication from the Deity; both the form, and the act of worship, bear a manifest reference to some known and established ceremony; and the terms of the covenant made with Noah in consequence of it are precisely the same with that renewed afterwards with Abraham, *I will establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;* evidently alluding to a covenant already in being, which had been made, and which, from a sense of his great deliverance, he must be satisfied would never be broken.

The descendants, however, of Noah, like the descendants of Adam, soon forsook the ways of the Lord, and at last filled up the measure of their iniquity by their idolatrous confederacy at the tower of Babel. The unchangeable word had passed, that they should be no more destroyed by water; and like Cain, they were now driven from the presence of the Lord; left (as the Apostle argues) to their own imaginations, till their foolish hearts were darkened, and professing themselves wise, they became fools. But the promise given in the Garden of Eden remained sacred, and again we see another faithful servant called out of the idolatrous land, and led by the hand of GOD into the paths of truth and righteousness. In personal intercourse, in heavenly visions, in prophetic revelations, he was instructed, blest, and comforted; and the history of Abraham is the typical history of all true believers, who, in full assurance of faith, sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country, looking for a better, that is, an heavenly habitation. From Abraham, the father of the faithful, as from a root, the visible church rose as a tree, distinct from all others; but when every

thing had been done for Christ's vineyard, and the vine that ought to have produced good grapes, *brought forth sour grapes*, the Gentiles were grafted in. Its heavenly nurture, its progressive growth, its blessed fruit, were disclosed to him in fuller light. In the promise of a son, in the plains of Mamre, in the land of Moriah, he is addressed by One, whose title is, *I am the Almighty* GOD; and who, in Apostolic language, being *in the form of* GOD, *thought it not robbery to be equal with* GOD. In the renewal of the covenant of grace, it was not only made known to him, that Christ was to be of Abraham's seed; but the calling of the Gentiles, the bringing all nations into the church, that all the families of the earth might be blessed, were matters of distinct revelation by Him who said, *Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.* Throughout the whole Patriarchal age, we find the same guardian Power, and the same gracious Providence, watching over and protecting the covenanted blessings of his servants; and either by interesting points of resemblance, by type, by figure, or prophetic direction, leading them to just apprehensions of

the true God, and to the performance of such worship, as would procure his favour and acceptance: concealing no glory that could be manifested to mortal eyes, and unfolding a mercy that should embrace every son of Adam, who called upon his name.

Such was the religion of the Patriarchal church, which went out into all the earth; in the purity of which the antient fathers of our faith lived and died; which the Jews constantly affirm to have been handed down from Adam to Noah, and the wisest heathens to have come to them (in the portions it did come) by revelation and tradition; which was published and preached to the old world by the antediluvian prophets, from Adam successively to Noah; and to the new, by Noah and Shem, by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in Canaan; by Joseph and the Church, in Egypt; by Moses and Aaron, as it remains to shew, at the deliverance from thence, when it was re-published in writing; by the standing evidence of the church in Judea, which was surrounded by the Gentiles on all sides, and in the very center of the then known world; by the proselytes, that travelled to and

from thence, and the intercourse the Jewish people successively had with the four great monarchies--the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman; by the prophets of GOD occasionally, by Jonah in particular at Nineveh; by Jeremiah, in Egypt; by Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego, and Zechariah, and the Church in captivity at Babylon; by the translation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament into Greek, which was at that time generally understood; and by various other means, till the blessed Apostles carried it accomplished to the remotest parts of the earth.

It is to this view of the sacred writings that I wish to open your eyes, to contemplate the JEHOVAH of the old covenant in the Redeemer of the new, and in the founder of Christianity, the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, who had declared, that besides Him there was no Saviour. Every occurrence and every character in the scripture history was written for our instruction and example, and what, in the short detail of this discourse, could only be made subject of allusion, would, to a reflecting mind, furnish materials of thought, which would finally

center in Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith. If the preservation of Noah in the ark be true, who shut the door of it, but He who is now calling the sinner to repentance, lest he outstay the day of grace, and the door of his Father's kingdom should be shut against Him for ever? Who released him from his imprisonment, and bade him tread securely upon a new world, but He who is to unbar the portals of the grave, and lead the family of the faithful to their new inheritance? Can we read of the Lord raining fire and brimstone from heaven upon the devoted cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, without thinking of Him, before whom, at his final judgment, is to go a consuming fire, when He shall visit in his anger the wickedness of those who dwell upon the earth; who alone is able, and has promised, to save us from the ruins of a burning world, and from those fires that never shall be extinguished; and who is now calling to every Christian, as He did to the faithful Lot, *Haste, escape for thy life.*

From the beginning to the end of all things the language of revelation has been one, the road to salvation the same—that *as in Adam all*

die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. On the right or the left of this path of faith all is darkness and error, and the multitudes who have wandered and perished, should be a warning to those who survive. We have much among us now of natural divinity and rational religion, which kindly take us out of the hands of the first and only instructor of mankind, to prove to us that there is a GOD, and a future state of retribution; and after carrying us to the bounds of immortality, leave us there without sanctification and without redemption, the only means of passing its barriers. Is our light, then, so dim at the completion of promise, that we want such guides? Is the covenant of mercy so little understood, as to need such explanations?

Those solemn assertions, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life,* and *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,* shew us a life of grace, that no human reason can supply, and give us an hope in death, that nothing without Christ can afford. If we abandon Him, we abandon the only ground of true hope that ever was discovered to the world. Everlasting in his nature, his salvation must be for ever. He is

Jesus our Saviour, the sacrifice to purge our sins; He is JEHOVAH our Righteousness, to justify our persons. Whatever names are peculiar to Him throughout the prior dispensations, and which we may hereafter collect, they are all blended in our code of faith, in the beloved *Son of GOD*, who was to *take away the sins of the world;* who is the everlasting King of everlasting love and peace, whose mercies are everlasting, because He is everlasting. Like Abraham, therefore, may we obey his voice, and keep his charge, his commandments, his statutes, and his laws; and then we shall be called to sit down with Him in *the kingdom prepared for us before the foundation of the world.*

SERMON III.

HEBREWS xi. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

AS far as we have hitherto pursued the object of our enquiry, it has been to set before you, in the plain though prophetic language of scripture, the great doctrines of Christianity; to lead you to the true knowledge of your GOD and Saviour; to prove the stability of his mercy and faithfulness to his church and people, and that those whom He hath once loved, and was pledged to save, He will love and preserve to the end. But before we proceed to the distin-

guishing particulars of the Mosaic dispensation, and from thence to the brighter era of Christianity, let us look back upon the visitations of God's Providence, and try, whether we can discover among them any that may furnish additional proofs to our general argument, or any that may strengthen it by distinct illustration.

Admitting the Bible to be the written word of God, and an authentic narrative of events, under his immediate guidance and direction; it is a history in which every human being is concerned, and it must be a revelation of duties of permanent and perpetual obligation. The object of it is the instruction of man created after the image of his Maker; and whatever may have been the mode or degree of divine communications, the tendency of them has been the same; the revelation, the prophecy, and the miracle, all conspire to promote one heavenly purpose: they are only the different parts of a building unto God, Christ being the chief corner-stone; and the work of redemption, which neither the passions of men have frustrated, nor any convulsions of nature altered, will remain firm and immove-

able upon the *rock of our salvation*, till the whole be completed in the final deliverance of the faithful.

If we lose sight of this grand and gracious design, every thing that has passed, or is now passing, in the world, becomes a confused revolution of events; which, like the waves of the sea, beat upon the shore of time with a momentary noise, and soon sink into the calm of oblivion: the promises and rewards, the threatenings and the punishments, the destruction and deliverances, which appear as invariable consequences of man's observance or neglect of his duties, cease to be admonitions and examples recorded for our instruction, no longer vindicate the ways of God to man, but present a series of marvellous occurrences, of which a lapse of ages may be allowed to erase the remembrance, or which temporal ease and immediate security forbid us from connecting with any personal or national application.

To what this forgetfulness of God's judgments has led mankind, let the heathen world pronounce; of the miseries to which it is now leading them, let the christian world beware.

The wheels of Providence are not turned round by blind chance, nor directed by human agency. *They are full of eyes round about,* and they are guided by the spirit of God; *where the spirit goes, they go;* and whether rolling over kingdoms, or crushing a whole people in their motion, they set out from the throne, and to the throne of Him, *who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* will they again return, with the accomplished work of redemption.

The scriptures, and the scriptures only, unfold one entire system of divine administration from the creation to the end of all things; and man, with all his passions, is made subservient to it.

Distinct from every other history, the narrative and the application go together; it addresses itself to every government, to every people, and to every individual. Without detailing their errors, or commenting upon their good or evil management, it manifests the interfering Providence of God in every part of his moral administration, it cries aloud to us, *them that honour me I will honour, and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed;* and whilst it is hard to select a maxim in the moral or po-

litical theories of man, which, during a course of ages, has not found some more enlightened teacher to correct its errors, or supply its defects, *the wisdom that is from above*, consecrated in the school of example, has proved its unchangeable origin, and directs us to the wretched victims, who have either depreciated its value, or despised its admonitions. Thus mixing the records of antiquity with the operations of our own hearts, the holy writings afford a resemblance to every picture, and give to every document a peculiar worth and influence. The men and the events are blended with the things, which belong to our everlasting happiness; and the judgments which have overtaken iniquity, have only engraven the precept upon so many awful monuments, that *there is no peace to the wicked*, and that *they have great peace, who love the laws of the Lord.*

Of the various actions and characters therein enumerated, we may safely leave to the Christian reader the typical application; he may err in some prophetic allusion, he may force a comparison into some remote junctures and dependencies; but he cannot fail to comprehend

the lesson of righteousness, and to know his only teacher, God. He cannot fail to observe, how few have learnt it in the school of mercy; and that the stubbornness of the heart had only been softened under the discipline of affliction.

In commenting upon the dreadful event, which in our last discourse we purposed making the subject of particular discussion, there can be little danger of any misapplication. It is a history marked with such terrific warning; it is an embassy of mercy and judgment so fully declarative of a Redeemer's office, and of the terms of our Christian covenant; it proclaims to us, with such formidable authority, wherein human safety alone consists, that every part and every incident of it seems an appointed representation of the church of Christ, of its promised security, and of the final overthrow of all its enemies; and the afflictive example comes to confirm the Apostolic assertion, that though *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, He will reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished.*

Ascending, therefore, the hill of divine contemplation, and looking down from the watch-

tower of faith on the destruction of a guilty race, and the renovation of mankind in the family of the preserved Patriarch, be it our endeavour to engrave upon the tablets of our hearts every circumstance of the solemn admonition; till beholding in the person and in the preservation of Him who was found faithful, a perfect delineation of Christ the true Noah, and of the salvation wrought by Him at his first advent, we carry our reflections onwards to the present state of our existence, to the things which shall befall us, and the earth on which we tread. And viewing, with suitable apprehension, the same scene which is now acting in the world, may we learn in time *the things which belong unto our peace*, and to provide against the same dreadful consummation, which will be fully and finally accomplished at Christ's second coming to judgment, at the approaching dissolution of the world by fire, and the preservation of the family of the faithful in the ark of his church.

Noah, says the Apostle, *warned of* God *of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.* That is, in the true spirit of faith, he acted upon the ma-

nifestation of God's word unto him, as from the most convincing evidence. There were no visible appearances of nature, to warrant the belief of a flood; the sun rose and set as usual; the seasons returned at their appointed periods; and the affairs of the world went on in the same accustomed current. The subtle disputers also of those days, like the enlightened philosophers of these, were probably spending the time allotted to them for repentance and amendment, in deciding upon necessary causes and effects; or during the one hundred and twenty years, in which the Patriarch incessantly warned them of the impending desolation, and *to flee from the wrath to come*, instead of turning to their God, might be employing their infidel wit in ridiculing the poor man's credulity, and the visionary plan he had adopted, of saving himself and houshold, by building an ark with such toil and expence, to sail over the mountains. Even the few, who from the earnestness of the preacher, or some slight misgivings of conscience, could not shake off all apprehension of the dreadful consequences, should the prophecy prove true, like the wavering Christian

of the present day, might have said, *Lord, I believe,* and then gone their way; *one to his farm, another to his merchandize* or to his pleasures, waiting to see what the rest of the world would do; and composing themselves with the thought, that they should fare no worse than their neighbours.

With belief and practice thus at variance, and from an eagerness to fasten upon any shadow of consolation, every plausible objection would soon raise a doubt, or furnish demonstration. By some they would be convinced of the natural impracticability of the event. By others they might be questioned, and which, in minds thus disposed, would amount to the most satisfactory proof. Whether, allowing every thing to the power of God, it were consistent with his mercy, or reconcileable to his justice, to raise up such a goodly fabric in order to destroy it? Could any rational mind deem it credible, that a Being of infinite goodness should so signally punish a whole generation, whom He had formed for enjoyment, (and among whom, also, there must be different degrees of guilt, and some even incapable of offence) for trespassing

a little, perhaps, beyond the bounds of moderation; or at worst, for pursuing their career of pleasure, in a few cases, to a culpable excess. Besides, with full allowance as to the corrupted state of the world, and stating the sum of its iniquity at the height of the most pious computation, was there not much to admire, much to revere in it? Were all its advances in knowledge, arts, and civilization, to be left out of the account? Were all the comforts of human invention no symptoms of improving happiness? And because of a little evil here and there, were they to be terrified with the superstitious dotage, that every vestige and form of this fair creation would be swept away into utter and endless ruin? Unwilling to deny, or borrowing a sort of security from such convincing arguments, they went on, as our Saviour tells us, *eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage*, until the day arrived when Noah entered into the ark, and the hour of conviction became to them the hour of destruction.

In spite of all this specious train of reasoning, (and which pretty much accords with the liberal opinions of the present day) the word of God

prevailed; the flood did come, as Noah had foretold; and the despised preacher of righteousness now alone found help and safety in the GOD of his salvation. His friends, his neighbours, and relations, who had either neglected, or presumptuously derided, his admonition, looked in vain to him for help! There was no *hiding place*, no *refuge from the storm*, but within the ark—and GOD had shut the door. The waters, which soon rose above the highest hills, bore all away with irresistible force; the day of acceptance was over, and the night of judgment closed in for ever on a corrupt and perverse generation! Thus Noah condemned the world, and thus, by confiding in and acting upon the promises of his GOD, he became, as the Apostle states, *heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

But interesting as this dreadful narrative must appear, either as a striking monument of divine indignation, or as confirming the certainty of revelation on which our belief is founded, when from the prediction thus proclaimed, and thus fulfilled, we bring the mercy and judgments of our GOD into nearer comparison, it

speaks, or it ought to speak, with more awakening effect. And if the preacher of righteousness to the old world be allowed to stand forth as a type of the messenger of peace and salvation to the new, if the deliverance from a flood of water be the picture of as sure a deliverance from the flood of sin and death, over which we are to be borne triumphant, through faith in Christ Jesus, then the history applies itself to all our hopes, and to all our fears; then it gives to precept the confirmation of experience; and in its beginning, its progress, and its end, marks the rise, the success, and accomplishment of a Saviour's doctrine and kingdom.

To establish the final covenant between the Creator and his creatures, to fulfil the last promise of forgiveness to his rebellious subjects, and to shelter us from *the wrath to come* by timely notice of our danger, did the Son of God (the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head) *take our nature upon Him, and visit us in great humility.* And unless we refuse to attend to the purport of his coming; unless we disdain, like those in the time of the despised Patriarch, to listen to his admonitions;

we shall see the same protecting arm held forth to save, the same avenging hand uplifted to destroy; we shall find a repetition of the same consoling promises, and the same tremendous consummation. *My spirit*, said the Almighty, *shall not alway strive with man, for that he also is flesh, and the end of all flesh is come before me; but come thou and thine house* (addressing himself to Noah) *into the ark.* Is the language of our Saviour less authoritative, or less explicit—*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?* But, as in the case of Noah, holding forth the means of salvation to all believers, *Come unto me*, says he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* He saw the tempest that was ready to break on a guilty world, and viewing it in all its desolating consequences to impenitent men, *he prepared an ark for the saving of his house;* he instituted and ordained his church, *against which the gates of Hell were not to prevail*, to shelter the family of the faithful from the impending storm.

Here, safe with our spiritual Noah, we may defy the raging elements; from hence the Angel of Peace, at the final wreck of all things,

will go forth and return like the Dove with the olive branch, to tell us that our footing is sure, that new heavens and a new earth appear, and that we may again tread with safety in the presence of our GOD and Saviour.

If, then, salvation by Jesus Christ be the object of our hopes and wishes; if in faith we would truly turn to him, lest with hearts of unbelief we should fall into condemnation; if also the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations (as we trust to prove) were only different inclosures, which GOD by several ordinances had fenced, to keep his church unmixt with and separate from the world, and to preserve within its fold the adopted children of Christ's holy family; are we not summoned to look to our everlasting Deliverer, and to consider how these things are accomplished in us, who live in this last age of the world?

The same Spirit, my brethren, that preached in Noah to the old world, and in Christ to the Jews, preaches now to you in the ministration of the Gospel. We are appointed and ordered to warn you from GOD *of things not seen as yet*, of a sudden and invisible destruction coming like a

whirlwind *from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, upon all the inhabitants of the earth; when, at his second advent, the Lord himself, terrible in judgment, as He is rich in mercy, *shall descend, in flaming fire*, the earth shall be dissolved from its foundations, the rocks melt, and the mountains flow down in liquid fire at his presence. *The earth, which was of old*, says St. Peter, *being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.* Surely, such a warning from God, of things the more terrible for that we see them not, of things that will assuredly come to pass, though all mankind should resolve not to think of them, should move us, like the holy Patriarch, with fear. Nor unless daily observation evinced the truth of it, could the thoughtlessness and indifference with which some can listen to such warning, be deemed credible.

We cannot better illustrate our meaning than by a familiar though painful comparison. Some of us may have felt, but all of us can imagine, the horror and distraction of a man's

mind, when his house is on fire, without any place of shelter provided for himself and destitute family; and yet that same man shall sit and hear of the heavens melting all around him, a fiery gulph rolling beneath, the earth he stands upon sinking into it, and no care taken to assure an everlasting habitation to receive him, with a careless unconcern, an idle curiosity, or a sort of mental inattention, thinking only what is to become of the rest of the day, when the customary tribute of public worship is over.—These things are, and will be for a lamentation; all that we can do is to give you the warning we have received from God, to pray that it may be recorded in the book of everlasting remembrance, that after the warning given, should the sinner die in his iniquity, his blood may not be required at the watchman's hand; to tell you, that though the elements be dissolved with fervent heat, and a fiery deluge shall swallow up the world of the ungodly, in the ark of Christ's church the family of the faithful shall remain unhurt; but if we are not found among that blessed number, when terror and desolation drive us to seek for refuge, the door will be shut.

The signs of the times are such, as to portend, in the opinion of many serious and reflecting minds, the day of grace expiring, and the speedy completion of the interval left for repentance; but whether they do or not, whether the Archangel's trumpet shall awaken us from our graves, or appal us in our dwellings, there is no alteration in the divine decrees. The sinner will be overwhelmed in sudden destruction, the penitent will be taught a way to escape it. Every page of the holy scriptures enforces this doctrine, and example presses upon example with the most convincing evidence, to shew the valuable consequences of abiding fast for protection by the word and sanctuary of our God. He who remembered Noah, and brought him out in safety, has signed and sealed with his blood the everlasting covenant, that when every work of man shall perish, and the globe itself be effaced from the universe, He will lead forth his redeemed to new abodes of life, and to mansions of eternal glory.

Instead, however, of guarding our hearts with this great and glorious truth, as a shield of defence, we sometimes doubt its power, and some-

times know not its use. Taught to look to an heavenly inheritance, our eyes are too short-sighted for the prospect, they take in no happiness but that within our immediate reach; and as if the only blessing of man were his share of personal gratification, as if the warning of God of *things not seen as yet* had no positive relation with the affairs of this life, or that its consummation was at too great a distance to excite present apprehension, how many delude themselves with the same fallacy of reasoning, with the same vanity of imagination, as they who perished in the days of the Patriarch. *As it was*, says our Saviour, *in the days of Noah*, (for we will repeat his own comment upon the history) *so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man; they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage;* they were so entirely occupied with earthly concerns, as to shut out all thoughts of heavenly ones, and to be regardless of *the things that belonged to their peace, till the flood came, and bore them all away* to the bar of divine judgment, to give an account of their misspent time and talents. Is our conduct different? And though death may realize to us in

a moment all the desolation of a flood, and all the horrors of a conflagration, *we sit down to eat and to drink, and rise up to play*, as if no such event were to happen; as if destruction did not await, and judgment would not overtake us. When the Redeemer of the world brought to us the covenant of mercy and love, He is said *to be the light that shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;* to have *come unto his own, and his own received him not.* He has been the despised preacher of righteousness, and will continue to be so, till judgment arrive, and when at his second advent, as he states with melancholy foreboding, *He shall hardly find faith upon the earth.*

Of those who profess to hear the word of God, how few treasure it up in their hearts, as the greatest blessing and the only consolation of human life. Some question its awful truths, some doubt its awful sanctions; almost all have knowledge enough within themselves, and *need not that any man should teach them.* Some are occupied with worldly cares, or absorbed in worldly pleasures, they sit their hour out, and think no more of it; others come to a sermon,

as they would do to a concert, of whom the prophet Ezekiel complains. He was to the Jews as *a very lovely song of one who had a pleasant voice, and could play well on an instrument;* they heard his words, but never did them. And a no small number there may be, whose pious sentiments being awakened, could find it in their hearts to say to the preacher, as Agrippa did to St. Paul, *almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*— With those, however, whose persuasion is rooted in faith, *nothing doubting;* whose hope of safety is in the ark of their Redeemer, whose expectation is strengthened, and whose trust is confirmed, will the minister of the Gospel still rejoice and pray; and if in the progress of prayer, and praise, and exhortation, he may have brought to the afflicted soul a Comforter, to the humble one an encouraging Redeemer, or to the desponding one a Deliverer *mighty to save*, he might then at the close of his ministry cry out with the exulting Simeon, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

But the success is in our Master's hands, not ours; whether you hear, or whether you forbear,

thus we are to preach, and thus you say you believe; thus also ye stand self-condemned, if you act not accordingly. Every dispensation has been to shew the relationship of man to God and an eternal world; it has been clothed in mercy, and armed with terror; it has tried to win him to his duty, it has invariably punished the breach of it; it has promised, upon repentance and obedience, to secure his felicity and pardon; it has denounced and accomplished the severity of judgment, to avenge the scorn of his miraculous mercies.

We proclaim to you, my brethren, on a Saviour's asseveration, that these are the terms, and that this will be the issue, of the Christian covenant. If we suffer it not to avail to our salvation, it will avail to our condemnation; and *God will be true, though every man be found a liar.* The threatenings of scripture are not empty words; the tabernacle of Shiloh, the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of Israel, will soon come in additional evidence, that unless we glorify God that is in us, unless, whilst grace and mercy abound, we hold fast our faith, the inheritance we had forfeited, and which

through Christ has been gained for us, we shall lose for ever.

We have the same warrant of truth to assure us, as Noah had for the coming of the flood, that the sun shall be extinguished in eternal darkness, the heavens rolled together like a scroll, the earth vanish into smoke till the place thereof know it no more; and that the soul, in happiness or in misery, shall survive the general wreck. If Noah, therefore, were saved by stedfastly trusting in Him, who called him unto the ark, what is to become of us, if we listen not to the same voice, which has expressly declared, *no man cometh unto the Father but by me*, and which has shut upon the hypocrite and ungodly the door of his Father's kingdom, with this sentence of rejection—*Depart from me, I know ye not whence ye are.*

With death and judgment before us, and looking to Him who alone can shield us from their terrors, we will now close our digression in the very form of prayer, which our Church has adopted, in allusion to the text, beseeching the Almighty God to render this our warning efficacious.

"Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water, we beseech thee by thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon us; that we, being delivered from thy wrath, may be preserved in the ark of Christ's church into which we have been admitted; and being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, and the last dreadful flood of fire, that we may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with Thee world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SERMON IV.

DEUTERONOMY iv. 11, 12.

And ye came near, and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven with darkness, clouds and thick darkness. And the LORD *spake unto you out of the midst of the fire.*

AMIDST blessings and deliverances, in judgments and in mercy, have we hitherto seen the triumph of the church of GOD, and the destruction of its enemies. Through every generation has it proved true, that faithful is He that has promised; and through every generation will it remain true, that the righteousness which is of Christ will make foolish the wisdom of this world, and afford us knowledge

and consolation, when the vanity of human science shall appear, and the help of man be fruitless. During a series of ages commencing with the original promise made to Adam, and marked by special acts of grace and favour, a worship and religion, founded upon the expectation of a Redeemer, and typical of the nature and glory of his kingdom, has been uniformly continued and protected. From the fall to the flood, from Noah to the call of Abraham, from him to his descendants, and to the appointed close of their afflictions in Egypt, are periods to which no human record pretends to reach, but to which the scriptures of GOD bear ample and accurate testimony. By these, the design and scheme of Providence is developed; the trials and rewards of expecting and patient faith, before the law was given, are detailed; the promulgation of that sacred institute, with the concomitant sanctions and miracles that confirmed it, together with the prophecies which testify its purpose, and the glory that should follow, are all revealed; and all coincide to form one great preparative to that most merciful and glorious event, wherein *the seed of the woman*

was to *bruise the serpent's head, and all the families of the earth to be blessed.*

We now proceed to the history of a people, which, though expressly written (as we are told) for our example, and the only one upon earth in which we are peculiarly interested, is too often set aside for pages, which, however alluring by their strains of poetry or eloquence, substitute only the virtues and policies of nations which knew not GOD, nor looked for his salvation;—pages, which, for the righteousness of GOD, present us with the splendid vanities of man; for his plain testimony set before us, the philosophy of the disputant, and for his sanctification, the wisdom of this world; a wisdom, of the melancholy effects of which the present state of Christianity bears witness, and which, in nations who have cultivated that alone, the Almighty hand, bringing to nothing the understanding of the prudent, has rendered foolishness indeed.

In this book of Deuteronomy (so called from being a republication or repetition of the former law) Moses, as a last testimony of affection for those whom he had so long governed and in-

structed, recapitulates the marvellous instances of an interfering Providence, and the miraculous train of events which had accompanied their rescue from Egyptian bondage, and supported and directed them for a series of years in a barren and pathless wilderness. He reminds them of their mutinous upbraidings and consequent punishments, of their repentance and forgivenesses. He exhorts them to *keep the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments of the Lord their* GOD, *and to walk in his ways; that He might be unto them a* GOD, *and keep unto them the covenant and the mercy, which He had sworn unto their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* But if they failed in the observance of them, and to fear and worship that great and glorious name the Lord their GOD, that instead of being multiplied and blessed, they should be left few in number, they should be scattered among all people, and should perish from off the good land, which the Lord was to give them for an inheritance.

The Jewish law-giver had now nearly compleated the purport of his office, and the end of his appointed days; he was arrived on the

banks of the river Jordan, which it had been ordained he should not pass; and of those who had departed with him from Egypt, the greatest part had been cut off for their rebellion from the land of promise, and had fallen in the wilderness. To their surviving posterity, therefore, the relation of these events would carry with it all the interest of domestic narrative; and the rising generation, whose instruction he seems to have chiefly in view, from having thus made known to them the origin of their fathers' misfortunes, might be taught to acquaint themselves early with their Creator, to remember that GOD was their rock, and the High GOD their Redeemer. That they might acknowledge the merited chastisement of those who had so signally paid the penalty of disobedience, Moses, in the words before us, carries them back to the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai; to the manifestation of GOD's will before the whole assembled host of Israel; to the covenant then ratified between them and their Creator; to the proclamation of mercy, which rested upon their covenanted obedience, *I will be to them a* GOD, *and they shall be to me a people.*

Nothing can be imagined more impressive than the reference he makes, and in the presence also of many surrounding witnesses, to one of the most awful and tremendous appearances that ever was exhibited to the eyes of men.—His circumstantial description, quitting all figurative expression, shews them, arrayed in glorious majesty, the GOD of their fathers, who claimed their obedience—their Creator originally, their Governor and Preserver at present, and the *Lord GOD Omnipotent for ever.*

The time also, the circumstances, and the cause of the heavenly scene were such, that he might well say, *Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is GOD—There is none else beside him.* They had been just delivered from the yoke of a great and powerful nation; they had been advancing for several days in a wide and perilous wilderness, filled with apprehension for their safety, and doubting or mistrusting the hand that had hitherto so signally preserved them. Ready to take every alarm, and encamped at the foot of a horrid and desolate mountain, which served to increase their sense of danger, they receive a message

from their GOD (the exertions of whose stupendous power they had so lately seen in the field of Zoan, and in the Red Sea) to prepare and sanctify themselves to appear before him on the third day, when He would come down on the mountain, to display before them the majesty of his presence, and to vindicate his slighted authority.

On the appointed morning, with thunder and lightning for his messengers, and preceded by a noise like the blast of an exceeding great trumpet, the LORD proclaims his approach.—Soon He descends, as He had said, upon the mountain, which immediately in a smoak burns and blazes up to the midst of heaven, and trembled to the very foundation at his divine presence. Thus riding in the storm, and situated upon a throne, towards which the terrified Israelites dared not turn their eyes, with a voice that shook the earth, He spake, in the hearing of all the congregation, the Ten Commandments. The people, dismayed at this tremendous appearance, and humbled before the voice of GOD speaking to them out of the midst of the fire, now supplicate the interposition of Moses; they earnestly

intreat, that GOD would be pleased to communicate his will through him, and not speak any more himself, lest they should die. GOD (for an obvious reason to be mentioned hereafter) approves of their request, and appoints Moses a mediator between himself and them. He is called up to the top of the mountain, and there, the tables of the Ten Commandments are given to him, written with the finger of GOD. He is shewn the heavenly patterns of the earthly tabernacle, and of all its service; he receives, by the ministry of Angels attending on GOD at this great solemnity, the Dispensation of the Law, which he delivered to the people, first by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing; the original of which was with the tables of stone deposited in the ark, and faithful copies taken and transmitted for public and private use through all succeeding generations.

Such are the events to which our text refers. Events, that involve in their consequences the whole race of man, but which exemplify to a Christian people (to whom the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath spoken through an heavenly Redeemer) the danger of doubting

his authority, or of rejecting his admonitions. Infidelity may deny the fact, but it cannot get rid of the evidence; it cannot falsify the historical records of a whole people; it cannot persuade them, that the memorials of their ancestors, the code of their laws, the manual of their devotion, and the celebration of their ordinances, had no foundation in truth. With as little prospect of success could it attribute the series of miracles, the accomplishment of prophecy, and all the pretensions of their favoured nation, to the common arts of human legislation. And though it might find the unbelieving Jew ready to join in an opposition to Christianity, it never could excite a prejudice against their great and revered legislator; it never could convert their faith into a system of credulity, nor change the Mosaic ritual into an engine of superstition.

To these hard speeches, and to this contradiction of sinners, we need not furnish the Jewish believer with an answer. But in the face of avowed hostility to Him who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, the Christian will reply, that He who gave the law, came to fulfil

and not to annul its injunctions; that the œconomy of grace lightened only the burthen of legal ceremonies; and that the gracious Author of their redemption from Egyptian bondage and Babylonish captivity was only manifesting, in their deliverance, the power and design of Him who was finally to *lead captivity captive*, to triumph over sin and death, and in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified and shall glory. The sanctions and doctrines of both dispensations, like those of every other preceding covenant, were confirmed by the word and in the presence of the Deity. And the revelation of his will from mount Sinai is only preparatory to a more tremendous display of his majesty, when not the mountain alone, but the whole earth, shall be on fire, and the universal race of mankind be assembled before Him.

In the redemption of fallen man, and in his justification through Christ, ends every covenant; and through Him will be accomplished every promise made to the faithful.—Upon this foundation, the pillar of all true and spiritual religion, were the holy lives of the Patriarchs supported; and when they are said

to have worshipped God in a right faith, it is that faith which looked with eager longing after that gracious Redeemer, who was to come *the light of the world*, and to join the chain of heavenly love, which the disobedience of man had broken.

From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and throughout all the successive ages of the Old Testament, we find a divine Ambassador, a spiritual Deliverer, an everlasting Redeemer, taking upon him the cause of his church, issuing his commands, aiding it by his protection, or comforting it by his assurances. And under the Jewish theocracy, temporal punishments and temporal deliverances were only a covenanted interposition of God's providence on striking occasions, to shew that the God of Israel alone had power to save or to destroy; and that the one God, from whom both Jew and Gentile were fallen away, by departing from the faith and religion of their first fathers, was the only God, in whose hands the promised reward was as unfailing as his nature, and in whose hands the threatened chastisement was as sure as the denunciation.

The nature of their hope in the Messiah, and the opinion they entertained of him who was to come, till it was corrupted by worldly expectations, may be learnt from the exalted titles and attributes with which He is every where invested. He is called—the *Lord* or *Jehovah*, the *mighty God*, the *Prince of Peace*, the *Saviour* and *Redeemer*, the *Angel of the Covenant*, and the *Strength of Israel;* a *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King;* the *Portion of Jacob*, the *Light of his People*, and the *Rock of their Salvation*. In short, under every claim of inherent divinity, under every title and name assertive of power and defence, was He known and acknowledged by the Jewish nation, whom they trusted should have redeemed Israel. They never disputed the dignity of the character, but the humility of the person who assumed it. When they ignorantly crucified the Lord of Glory, they crucified him for blasphemously arrogating a title, which could belong only to the exalted personage who was to reign over them. They challenge him to an exertion of that divinity, which was to prove his right to the sovereignty; they connect deity with royalty, they even interchange the terms, and in

their revilings in our Saviour's last moments, *If*, say they, *he be the Son of* GOD, if he be the King of Israel, *let him come down from the cross, and we will believe on him.* Thus linking their promised ruler in community of power with the patron GOD of their fathers, and unconsciously raising at the foot of the cross the ladder of faith that was to reach from earth to heaven.

This was the avowed belief of the Jewish nation; not the offspring of superstitious confession, but publicly proclaimed with all the insolence of bitter invective. And if He who was born of a virgin, be the same who expired on the cross, to divest him of his divinity is more than a participation of Jewish guilt. They fixed their hopes on a divine Mediator, but rejected him who came, and still look for another. The objector to the Christian creed acknowledges that Christ was he that should come, and yet withholds from him the claim of divine mediation. But the time will come, when the Law and the Gospel shall be proved to have preached one and the same doctrine; when the Jew shall *look unto him whom he had pierced,* and the Christian rejoice

in Him who made atonement for transgressions. And if one Gospel, one Faith, one Saviour, be the unvaried tone of the scripture language—if the earthly be a figure of the heavenly Canaan—a rejection from the one must be a rejection from the other; let the sinner and unbeliever read it thus standing upon heavenly record —*As I live, saith the* LORD, *none of the men that have seen my glory, and my miracles, and have not hearkened unto my voice, shall see the land which I sware unto their fathers.*

But of these matters we shall find occasion to speak more at large in the progress of our enquiry. We will now return to that singular people, whose history was written for our example; and to those peculiar rites and observances, which, except as significative emblems of the properties and actions of Him who was to fill the real tabernacle, could never have been the *shadow of good things to come,* could never have been our *school-master* to bring us unto Christ; would have only burthened the Mosaic œconomy with a load of unmeaning forms, and filled the sanctuary of GOD with the ministration of useless ceremonies.

The Mosaic history is not, like that of any other nation, a mere detail of political occurrences, or a summary of civil regulations; it is rather a family narrative (if we may so express it) of the whole house of God, in which Moses was formerly a servant, and over which Christ our Redeemer is the head. Descriptive, therefore, of the glory and majesty of Him who governed, his language must be inspired and prophetic; and being but an image of good things to come, the whole œconomy of his household could be only figurative and typical. We may not be able to explain satisfactorily every part of the plan, and future consummation alone can interpret justly each separate prediction; definition may be too vague, or illustration too remote; what is exhibited as proof may fail in its connection, and ingenious research may end in barren speculation. But we know enough of the ceremonial law, to make it an emblem of Christianity; we have seen enough of accomplished prediction, to prove our Saviour to be the end of the Law and the Prophets.

Not to detain you with a citation of examples which are within the reach of every one's appli-

cation, we will simply refer you to the Apostle's address to the Hebrews; wherein he not only argues, from the prophetic writings, on the expectation of a great and universal blessing, and the fulfilment of it in Jesus Christ, but even proves the ceremonial rites and the respective offices of their church to be constituent and immediate parts in the scheme of redemption, and as so many regular steps to lead us to the throne of mercy and forgiveness; thus repelling every arrogant claim of the Jewish nation, by grounding the Gospel on the Law, and taking away from their sacrifice and peace-offering all merit of justification, till their purifying conditions were connected with the atonement of our great and eternal High-Priest.

Thus far then have we brought the scriptures to bear witness of that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and which was manifested to us; we have watched the dawning light, and followed its course, till the luminous track begins to announce the glory that will soon arise. We have from the shadows discovered the substance; we have traced the typical images to the person of Christ, and incorporated every

word of truth with the Gospel of the everlasting God. Without reposing on apostolic assertion, we have endeavoured to establish on scriptural evidence, that Christ is the Alpha and Omega of his own revelations, and that they are a book sealed without him. They begin with his wisdom and power, and they end with his faithfulness and truth. All the intermediate pages are filled with the description of his person, divinity, and names, or with the recital of his providences in nature, and of his wonders in grace. From this root has sprung every dispensation, and through this root, though now separated from it, must the seed of Abraham be nourished, till they grow into faith, and are again united to the parent tree.

But may it not be a matter of enquiry, and an answer to it will go to resolve many questions of adventurous sophistry, why the Law was promulgated, and particularly in this manner? Why at all? Why in so public, why in so terrible a way? It would impeach, indeed, no article of our faith, to reply to such enquiries with a confession of our ignorance; because,

where the testimony of God is sure, it becomes us to honour it with a dutiful belief, though the cause of his operations be placed beyond the reach of human solution. The declarations, however, of God concerning his Son, and the way of salvation, being not only proposed in distinct articles of faith, but interwoven in the relation of circumstances, we may reason upon these circumstances, as upon so many scriptural proofs, diversified and extended through all ages of the world, to lead the thoughts to Him, *who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

If it were necessary to call Abraham out from his country and kindred so many years before, to secure a holy and believing line, in which the promise should be accomplished, much more was it necessary for the performance of that promise to re-publish the Divine Law, and to separate a peculiar people for the preservation of it, when the corruptions of traditional religion had filled the world with idolatry, and every consequent abomination; when among the most civilized nations, those of Canaan and Egypt, there was a general apostacy from the knowledge and worship of the true God, and

his name and honour were to be rescued from the hands of their senseless deities.

The re-publication, therefore, of the antient Law, with the peculiar additions now made to it, and the severe punishments inflicted upon idolatry, seems to have been the only mound that could in wisdom or mercy be opposed to the overflowing of transgressions. And with all their errors and corruptions, let the state of the Jews be compared with that of the greatest and the wisest nations in political estimation; let the degrading and abominable rites of the deities which they left behind them in Egypt, and which were afterwards transplanted to the altars of Greece and Rome, be opposed by the advocates for natural religion to the superstition of the tabernacle, and the ceremonial worship of the temple of Jerusalem.

The Law, also, as a partition-wall between the Jew and Gentile, now deposited in the ark in writing, transcribed from thence with the most accurate diligence for general use, and guarded with the most zealous caution, affords another convincing evidence of one Almighty purpose, and what was in fulness of time to be

produced, as bearing testimony of Christianity, was to be free from every suspicion, to be distinguished for the fidelity of its narrative, to confront the boldness of objection, to endure the severest scrutiny, to stand, as it ever has done, on the immoveable Rock of our salvation, and to bear aloft the features of its heavenly Legislator.

Thus also the question is resolved, why it was promulgated in so public a manner. Ordained to give a rationally incontestible evidence of its divine original, it was to produce an attestation from Heaven too positive to admit a doubt, and too general to suffer contradiction. And to suppose such a prodigious number of people not to know what they saw and heard; or that Moses would repeat to them (as he does in the text) what he knew had not been seen and heard, and then deliver the lie to them in writing, to obtain their future favour and confidence; to suppose, that any voice of man could be articulately heard by six hundred thousand persons at once, and what is more, shake the very earth itself; to suppose, that such a mighty commotion in the heavens above, and in the

earth beneath, together with the trumpet and voice heard out of the cloud and fire, could be the effect of human policy or contrivance; or that the Almighty should suffer any imposition, where his name was concerned, to be practised by any supernatural means;—is to oppose credentials properly divine, to believe impossibilities against the sure word of revelation, to make the voice of God the herald of a falsehood, and the power of God set his seal to an imposture.

The truth of the Law, therefore, and the terror of its publication, go together. Its object was to excite in the people awful sentiments of the power and majesty of the Lawgiver, to declare the purity, truth, and justice of his nature, and the corruption of theirs; to discover every man's heart to himself, and convince him of that corruption; to display the guilt and consequent punishment of sin; to awaken in the soul a fear of God, and of judgment to come; and to guide them by these means to repentance, and faith in the great Redeemer. *The fear of the Lord* was to prove to them *the fountain of life*. A sense of guilt implies a dread of punishment, and thus fear is justly called the begin-

ning of religious wisdom, of which love is the perfection. In the state of innocence Adam ran to meet God, and the intercourse with his divine instructor was the most exalted delight of Paradise; but when innocence was gone, he sought the shelter of the deepest cover, and on being called forth out of it, returned for answer, with a dejection never known before, *I heard thy voice, and I was afraid.* If this be called a figure of speech, every serious heart can furnish a real comment to it. The people of Sinai heard the same voice, and were afraid; a sense of of guilt had magnified the sense of danger, and they beseech the leader whom they had mistrusted and reviled, to interpose in their behalf, and to sustain the part of a mediator between God and them. Had we no other proofs to offer of the object and end of the law, the prophetic and affecting reply to this request, would be one of the most convincing: *I have heard the voice of the words of this people*, says the Almighty, *which they have spoken unto thee, they have well said, all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my com-*

mandments always, that it might be well with them and their children for ever. As if he had said, they have spoken well in desiring a mediator to transact with me what they are unable to do themselves; and how pleasing would it be to me, for the love I bear them, that they and their children after them would invariably pursue the one way to happiness, both present and everlasting; in so fearing my displeasure, in so feeling their own unworthiness, as on a principle of faith in the promised Redeemer, and in all He is to do, and to suffer for their reconciliation, to repent them truly of all their sins, and to walk in holiness and righteousness before me all the days of their lives.

This was evidently the reason of GOD's approbation of the people's request, and it was with a view to this, that the Law (as the Apostle speaks of it) was ordained in the hand of a Mediator, to guide the eye of the true believer to a better covenant, and to bind upon his heart that penitent and lively faith, without which, purification and atonement were but idle ceremonies, the spirit of the law had no substance, and the shadow of salvation no reality.

We are aware of the argument that has been drawn against any spiritual reference of the Mosaic dispensation, from the temporal rewards and punishments that were peculiarly annexed to it; but how do these exclude the doctrine of everlasting sanctions? How was GOD, (as our Saviour expostulated with those who doubted or disbelieved the resurrection) who was a GOD of the living, and not of the dead, the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob? Visible judgments are only GOD's alarming signals, and when He pathetically reasons with his people, by the mouth of his prophet—*Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* it could not allude to temporal death, for that was the common lot of mortality, the sentence had gone forth upon all flesh:—No; eternal life was the gift proposed, the everlasting Saviour was the giver. This is the life and soul, the vital energy of all religion; and from Adam to the present time, wherever this faith has failed, a total departure from GOD has been the consequence, or the warmth, the vigour, the dependence of devotion has expired with it.

You have now seen the Mosaic ritual succeeding in due order and course to the Antediluvian and Patriarchal dispensations; and we have exhibited a summary of proofs to awaken Christ's Church by his awful judgments, to convince us by his interfering providences, and to humble us by his patience under repeated provocations; but we have only unlocked the stores of heavenly truth, it is you that must apply them to use. We have only placed before you the holy writings, it is you that must examine their contents. We have only unfolded to you, as far as we are able, the counsels of creation, of providence and grace, it is for you to number down the blessings of the children of GOD, through a series of protection and deliverances; and then to combine all his decrees and promises in that consoling reward of a Christian's faith—*We know that all things work together for good, to them that love GOD; to them who are called according to his purpose.* That purpose hath been revealed to us; the Prophet, whom Moses foretold, has been raised up from the midst of us, and to him are we summoned to hearken. He is commissioned to rescue us from a bond-

age far more dreadful than that of Egypt, and to conduct us through many dangers to a kingdom, but faintly shadowed forth by a land flowing with milk and honey. Let us, then, beware of tempting Christ as they did, and of falling in the wilderness of this world through unbelief—*For if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven.*

SERMON V.

ST. JOHN i. 11.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

TO confirm the message of mercy to fallen man, and with every predicted mark of the heavenly visitant, to give fulfilment to prophecy, at the appointed period of time came the promised Redeemer. If our evidence, therefore, have been clear and consistent, we are surely addressing those, who, submitting to be taught by revelation, and filled with veneration and gratitude for the great and noble purpose to be effected by Him, are now assembled to commemorate and to welcome the advent of their infant Saviour. We are surely addressing those,

to whom the eye of faith has disclosed the mysteries of his birth, the dignity of his character, and the blessedness of his commission.

Through every dispensation the original promise of redemption has been moving onwards to its final accomplishment. No state of human affairs, no contrariety of human opinions, has impeded the progress or changed the plan of the divine councils. The consolatory hope which Adam was taught to encourage, and which was afterwards renewed in the deliverance of Noah, the grant made to Abraham, the successor foretold by Moses, the prefigurations of the Temple, the spirit of prophecy, and the expectation of ages, are all carried forward without a single defect of testimony to center in Him, who was incarnate for our salvation, to manifest the glory and goodness of Jesus Christ, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

Under so many descriptions and characters, and with such attesting pledges, has the Almighty guarded this covenanted truth, that unless it be admitted, sacred history has no reality, and prophecy no interpretation. Nor

is the expression of the Evangelist intelligible, without a reference to one progressive and uniform design of God's dispensations; without a reference to the intended blessing to his faithful people, to be communicated through Him, whose goings forth have been from everlasting, who had been their Creator and Deliverer, who was to be their Saviour and their Judge.

He came unto his own, says the Apostle, *and his own received him not.* Had the Law and the Gospel stood upon separate foundations, the application could have gone no farther than that a Prophet had arisen among them, in lineal descent from their revered progenitor, and who was come to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. With a rigid attachment to their own ritual form, they might have received Him as a Prophet sent to instruct them, (and indeed many did acknowledge Him in this capacity) without allowing that He brought any farther credentials than those miraculous exertions of power, of which the Almighty had also made their own great lawgiver his instrument.

When, therefore, the supposed Son of Joseph and Mary professed to abolish their divinely-

ordained ceremonies; when the very object of his mission was to expose the insufficiency of the Law, and to take from it every justifying plea; when the children of Abraham, the adopted of God, were called upon to renounce their exclusive privileges, and to partake with the rest of mankind in universal redemption; the refusal of the Jews to receive one, who, being born among them, arrogated such pretensions, could not have incurred such a pathetic and upbraiding remonstrance, unless it had been founded on the most significant and determinate indication of their Messiah's glory. The force and the conviction of the Apostle's argument rests on their rejection of the revealed will of God; it arraigns at once their obstinate prejudices, their misconceptions of the Law, their perversion of the Prophecies, and the ignorance of their spiritual state.

In rejecting Him who was to be born *of the seed of the woman*, and to *bruise the serpent's head;* who was to lead Abraham, and those who died in faith, to an heavenly Canaan; who was *to be raised up* among their brethren, a *Prophet like unto Moses;* and whom they were

to *hear in all things;*—they rejected the oracles of God, of which they boasted to be the guardians; they shut their eyes against express declaration, they hardened their hearts against an accumulation of evidence, and they renounced the same authority which they pleaded in defence of their own rights and their own superior distinctions.

Granting also the event, as a natural fact, to be incomprehensible, were not the miraculous interpositions of Providence on sundry occasions in their favour equally so? Did they disbelieve the burning bush, the plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the waters that flowed from a dry Rock, or the manna in the wilderness, because they could not account for them from natural causes? On the contrary, did they not glory in, and produce them as so many visible proofs of God's holy covenant with them? From the same scriptures, and from their own prophetic records, they were told of the office, the birth, and the divinity of their Messiah to come; and the proclamation, by rejoicing Angels, of the advent of Him, who *was made flesh*, and to dwell among them, with all

its triumphant consequences, was only the annunciation of completed prophecy—*Behold your God.*

In the human nature of Christ, therefore, when they refused to see the tabernacle of his divinity, they renounced their everlasting King and Priest, who, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, was by his eternal offering to make an eternal reconciliation for the sins of the people. When they disowned the heavenly Messenger of peace and pardon, they disowned the *Messenger of the covenant*, and the *Lord who was to come to his holy temple.*— When they boasted to have Abraham to their father, and insultingly scoffed at the Son of Joseph and Mary, they denied the God who had chosen them of the seed of Abraham, the Lord who had promised, by the mouth of his servant Moses, to visit them in the latter days, and who was now come to claim them as his own, and to secure to them the inheritance of the Patriarchs' blessings.

Upon this ground, and upon no other, can we justly place (if for argument-sake we dare use such an expression) the rejection and ruin

of Israel: Let Reason, so fond of prying into the councils of God, and of reconciling the decisions of them by its own assumed rule of right, assign any other cause, independent of Christ's divinity, which may reasonably account for the unexampled punishment of the Jewish nation. They did not object to Him as the son of Joseph and Mary; they did perceive Him to be a prophet mighty in word and deed; their reason could not disavow the evidence of their senses, but it refused to go farther, and through want of faith, they ignorantly crucified the Lord of Glory. Was this ignorance, though pleaded by a compassionate Saviour in behalf of his murderers, admitted in extenuation of their guilt or punishment? No. They had renounced their part and portion in his salvation; they had called down his blood upon themselves and their children; and during the space of eighteen hundred years, (and *till they look on Him whom they pierced*, will it continue to be so) has their imprecation been dreadfully visited upon them and their posterity.

We shall not, I trust, be now called upon to prove the necessity of belief in the doctrine of

the Incarnation. The evidence upon which the Jew was tried and sentenced, is the same in substance as that submitted to the Christian, and the preaching of the Gospel only confirmed the sufficiency and promises of prior revelation. The advent of our blessed Lord was the great demonstration of prophetic truth; and the future expectations which grow out of it as articles of faith, are only strengthened by the authority, the title, and office of the beloved Son of God. Take away the divinity of Christ, the Jew has yet his Messiah to come, and the Christian no redeeming Saviour; the Lord of Glory was not crucified, and the death upon the cross offers no atonement. But every revelation of God's will to man has invariably looked to this merciful and ultimate object; every dispensation under which he has lived, till all was perfected in a Redeemer, was built on the same foundation, and were so many different supports to the wall of partition which was finally to be removed, *when all nations were to be called to Christ, and the ends of the earth to be in his possession.*

Once more let it be observed, that a manifestation of the Divine will, which must presuppose a sufficiency of evidence, and a capacity to comprehend it, pledges both the veracity and omnipotence of God to the full completion of his word. In our whole prospect of the human race, from the creation to the present day, have we ever seen it fail of performing the thing it had uttered? Its authority, its sanctions, and its promises may have been derided, or disbelieved, but they have been dreadfully vindicated, and the visitations of his providence have ever tended to confirm that Almighty self-appeal—*Have I said, and shall I not do it—Have I spoken, and shall I not bring it to pass.* Our hope, therefore, must ever be proportioned to the measure of our faith; our religion can only begin, but never end, in the school of Reason.—She holds not the invisible chain that connects matter and spirit; she can put on no heavenly wings, nor carry the transported soul beyond the boundaries of its earthly prison; nay, sometimes, (though given us as an advocate for religion) has she erected herself into a judge, and only competent to examine the evi-

dence, has dared to discredit the integrity of the witness. Thus by misapplying her strength has Reason proved her weakness, and supplied human testimony to the divine assertion—that *faith will never stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of* GOD.

To proceed with any farther discussion, or to enter into the provinces of reason and faith, in order to define the limits of their separate dominions, would be to question the ability, or to repeat the arguments of some of the ablest defenders of the Christian doctrines. In the language of one of them be it then sufficient to observe, that "to make us better men, upon "hope grounded on his mercies, is the most "beneficial purpose, for which we can conceive "it possible for GOD to reveal himself, and "to this purpose we find a revelation made, "wherein that providence which extends to us, "is declared; and if the strongest external tes- "timony bear witness that GOD has revealed "himself, and that reason be incapable of pro- "ducing any evidence to the contrary, the "credibility of GOD is a ground whereon to "build our faith, in whatsoever He shall relate

" of his own incomprehensible majesty. More-
" over, as finite intellect can have no standard
" whereby to measure the conduct of an infinite
" Being, and no right or means of judging of
" the consistency of any act declared to be his,
" to dispute is to rebell. There lies no appeal
" from GOD's credibility, from his truth to his
" inscrutable nature. We must acquiesce in
" that which He has said. It must be—It is
" true."

With such dispositions, and with such dispositions only, shall we be taught in the stable of Bethlehem. By carrying back this part of the divine œconomy to the original promise in the garden of Eden, will the Christian church, now the daughter of Sion, only know how to rejoice in GOD her Saviour; will she only learn to glorify GOD for his mercy, to appreciate the value, and to hail the consummation of those heavenly tidings—*Arise, shine for thy light is coming, and the glory of the Lord is rising upon thee.* It is the eye of faith that must discover beneath the swaddling clothes the robe of immortality; it is the eye of faith that must discern to what a height GOD intends to build up

the happiness of man by taking our nature upon him, and making a human body the medium and pattern of that glory to which he designs to raise us. It is, in short, faith, *nothing doubting*, that will welcome the return of this holy season, and teach the believer to consider the nativity of his Redeemer as the notice of a christian's being *born again*, of *his death unto sin*, and *a new birth unto righteousness.*

If in humility we believe all this; if we have embraced the Gospel, which when tendered to the Jews, they rejected; if we are ready and prepared to worship Him who was born of a virgin, and whose birth they ridiculed and despised; and if the vail still remain upon their hearts which faith has removed from ours; then shall we hail this natal morning, as the morning in which a christian sets forth on his journey to the kingdom of his Heavenly Father. If Christ *came unto his own, and his own received not*, it is also stated, that *as many as did receive him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

Here we have at once the terms of reconciliation, and the seal of pardon. We have the

fore-ordained and effectual Mediator, the true and only *intercessor between God and man, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,* proclaiming and producing in person his own promised blessings. In visions and in dreams, by types and sacrifices, through various ministers and officers deputed by him, in many ways and divers manners, hath God declared his will to the fathers, but *in these latter days hath he spoken to us by his Son.* Other prophets had their times assigned them to rise, shine, and set again in death; but they all derived their light from *the Sun of Righteousness,* which, absorbing every lesser ray in his glorious splendour, is now arisen to set no more—*death hath no more dominion over him.*

Upon the incarnation, therefore, of our blessed Lord, as upon the foundation-stone of all her doctrines, the Christian church will delight to rest. As often as she hears the *tidings of great joy* repeated to a sinful world, she will find cause of special exultation in being thought worthy to inherit the blessing, to partake of the mercies, and to behold the salvation of God. Brought out of darkness *into a marvellous light,*

restored from death unto a new life, and raised from dust to share an angel's glory, she will be *filled with all joy and peace in believing;* she will hold fast *the confidence and rejoicing of hope;* and adore that grace which cast her lot in a place where the joyful tidings are for ever sounding in her ears, *Behold the desire of all nations, the expectation of Israel, He for whom the whole creation groaned—Behold thy God, thy righteous Saviour cometh.*

Wherever she turns her eyes, there will her heart be turned to the God of her salvation; and whether she looks back to the prevalence of that intercession, which in the first instance of disobedience changed judgment into mercy, and found a ransom for the guilty; or follows the operations of redeeming love through succeeding ages to the blessedness of the present day, when the visions of expected bliss have faded before the actual presence of the *King of Glory*—in all she will find incitement to wonder, gratitude, and love. Through every part of the divine œconomy, in the person of Christ she finds her Advocate, her Priest, and King; from his sanctifying sufferings she de-

rives her own sanctification; and while reaping the fruits of the covenant, whose seed was sowed from eternity, she gives him the name by which he is exalted in heaven, and glorifies *the only begotten Son*, who, as at this holy season, came forth from the Father for the universal redemption of mankind.

With the scheme of prophecy thus made perfect, on a day wherein the union of so many blessings is commemorated, wherein *the spirit of life which is in Christ, hath made us free from the law of sin and death*, we must necessarily have joy in believing; and while we attach our hopes of heaven to the person of Christ, we shall *boldly come unto the throne of grace*, to which our access is opened by such transcendant love. That we may not, therefore, reject the proffered mercy, that we may not slight the richest gift that was ever yet offered to the world, we must this day unite it to the giver; we must think on Him who came to reconcile, and on the mode of reconciliation; we must dwell on the qualifications of our Intercessor, on the nature of his plea, and on the cause he has to plead; we must, in short,

receive him into his kingdom of grace, if we would follow him into his kingdom of glory. From that now infant tongue we shall soon hear words such as man never before uttered; we shall hear claims of inherent divinity asserted, that no inspiration could communicate, nor even omnipotence confer; soon shall we see that infant form assuming the powers and invested with the attributes of the Godhead, bestowing pardon on the sinner, and raising the dead from their graves.

Either, then, we must deny the authenticity of the narrative, or no explanation can deprive our Saviour of that high prerogative to which he appeals; and when He vouchsafed to be partaker of flesh and blood, it was, that *being made like unto his brethren, He might be a faithful and merciful high priest*; it was, that the debt of human sin might be discharged by the Son of Man; it was, that by exhibiting in his own person a proof of faith and patience under the severest trials and afflictions, He might lend to his divine precepts the excitement of human example; it was, that in lifting up our minds towards his holy habitation, He might shield

them from the terror of doubt, and give to our imagination as it were a resting place in its boundless flight; it was, that through the Son of God exalted above all worlds, our finite conceptions might, as far as possible, be familiarised with that invisible and Almighty Being, whose power has been from everlasting.

From that prior state of glory, from that awful sublimity in which we have contemplated the *Lord of Hosts*, and the *avenging God of Jacob*, if we now turn and behold him accommodating the plan of man's redemption to the frame of human nature, and pursuing the purpose of his eternal happiness through the painful participation of our infirmities; under this and every other prophetic evidence, we find our infant Saviour, whose birth in Bethlehem-Ephratah had been predicted, identified with Him, that Mighty One, *which was, and is, and is to come;* with Him, who, in the awful disclosure of future scenes, is represented to the Apostle as sitting upon his eternal throne, and as the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, alone able to break the seals, and to open the book of prophecy.

Under the guidance, therefore, of the most sober reason, if we must be impressed with a conviction of his divinity, if we are forced to the undeniable confession of St. Peter, *thou art the Christ, the Son of the living* God—then remember, that in that belief we associate his incarnation, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and atonement. His humility as man will evince Him willing, His omnipotence as God will evince Him mighty to save.

Closing and combining the parts of one stupendous whole, the system of Christianity includes all these, and the separate articles of a Christian's creed are so many different memorials of the wonders of his redemption. Like the Patriarchal and Jewish blessings, however, much of our happiness remains in expectation. *We are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord our* God *giveth us.* We have only found the way in which Abraham was justified, and in which all true believers, the children of Abraham, must in like manner be justified. We have only seen the root of peace and joy to the whole earth spring up into a tree of life, and again we may eat

of its fruits unto holiness. Restored to this spiritual food, the believer is again called the child of God, the heir of immortal glory, the partaker of *an inheritance with the saints in light.* Informed by Christ of his heavenly journey, he may, like the eunuch, *go on his way rejoicing.* As the children of Israel, therefore, when they had seen the signs which Moses wrought, believed *that the Lord had visited his people,* let us bow down our heads, and worship Him who is indeed come to visit and redeem his chosen, who is come to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. With a free, a full, and everlasting mercy, hath He appeared, who was to give bread to the hungry soul; to the thirsty, the waters of life; who was to be *feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, a ransom for captives,* and *a garment of righteousness for the naked.* And if He, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* have hitherto fulfilled every promise, remember that our present song of praise is but a faint imitation of those shouts of exultation, when led forth by Angels, to hail the second advent of his Lord and Saviour, the Christian

shall behold every tittle of his word accomplished, and shall join in the triumphant cry—*Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our* God, *and the power of his Christ, for the Lord* God *Omnipotent reigneth, the Lord hath redeemed his people.*

SERMON VI.

HEBREWS xii. 22, 23, 24.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living GOD, *the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to* GOD *the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

TRACING up the stream of revelation thro' the wilderness of this world, where, for the preservation and comfort of the human race, it was still permitted to flow, to the garden of Paradise, where it nourished the tree of life, we are now arrived at its heavenly source; from hence we can distinctly trace its diverging cur-

rents, as they branched forth into all nations, sometimes indeed obstructed in their course, and almost every where polluted in their channels; whilst standing by the pure fountain of inexhaustible love, we can exclaim in joy and triumph—*Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.* We can proclaim to the faithful in our Saviour's own words, *He that believeth on me shall never thirst.* We can issue from thence his merciful and universal invitation, *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely.*

Where a consciousness of sin must have utterly rescinded all rational hope of acceptance with the GOD of perfect holiness, and only trembled at the impossibility of pardon from his unsatisfied justice, the consolations of his own word, and the promulgation of a Law, which renewed the possibility of a justifying obedience, restored that hope, and suggested, that however abhorrent from the divine purity the corrupted nature of man might have become, yet still the means of reconciliation and acceptance would be found, and the satisfying atonement supplied by the GOD of mercy

himself. With a conformable accomplishment, therefore, of all that had been testified beforehand by the Holy Spirit, and comprising within its sanctifying influence the object of all former dispensations, we find in Christianity the priest and sacrifice, the offering and the reconciliation. In the death of Christ we have seen the sufferings that have satisfied for sin; in the gospel, by which he has brought life and immortality to the perfect light, we have seen the glory that should follow.

Though writings of unquestionable antiquity afford collateral evidence to this doctrine, though the mythological systems of Heathen nations retain such indelible marks of this origin, as necessarily lead to the establishment of that faith from which they departed, yet it being my sole purpose to exhibit Christ and his redemption as the great subject of the sacred scriptures, I intentionally forbear the citation of these proofs. I would establish the sufficient testimony of the sacred writings, and then commit them to your hands as a treasure of divine knowledge, wherein you are to search for *the*

pearl of great price, and wherein every part has its specific use and value.

We are here, as the grand foundation of the articles of our faith, instructed in the cause of sin, of its entrance into the world, and of death by sin, as the just judgment of God to the condemnation of all men, who by the offence of one were made sinners. We are here instructed, that consolatory hopes of restoration were in the instant imparted by the God of mercy to the abashed original of all our woe. The scheme of redemption grows gradually clearer, and is for ever, whether by promise, by type, or by prophecy, kept open to our view; till at length, being made free from sin, by the righteousness of One who has *tasted death for every man*, we are instructed, that *the free gift* has come upon all men unto justification of life; and that as *the wages of sin is death*, so *the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ*, to all, who, in every period and under every dispensation, with respect to the *great recompence of the reward*, believed to the saving of the soul. An humble Christian spirit of research is alone wanting, to behold *the day spring*

from on high which hath visited us; to find out Him in the scriptures of God, who revealed the truth, who then came to seal it with his blood, and left his church to be its perpetual and faithful guardian. With what clouds, therefore, must we envelope our hearts and understandings, if that light of revelation, which has successively shone through every dispensation, should in these latter times shed its splendour in vain.—But unless we suffer *the true light that was to light every man that cometh into the world,* to conduct us to realms of unspeakable glory, every other will prove a meteor that will delude us. The brightness of natural religion will at last prove an ineffectual fire, the lamp of reason grow dim, every path of hope will be obscured, till our feet *stumble upon the dark mountains,* and we have no guide to direct our goings.

But as a faith in futurity was required, and found in the predecessors of the gospel dispensation, so also, not only in the price that has purchased our redemption, but in the future possession of that purchase itself, is our faith required. The promise to them was the means of mercy; the promise to us is the efficacy of

those means. The first advent of our blessed Redeemer has only fulfilled the promises in part, and left the Christian, like the Patriarchal and Jewish believer, to future hopes and future consummation. That He, who was *wrapt in swaddling clothes in a manger*, now sits upon an eternal throne, above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; that He, who *visited us in great humility*, is now *crowned with glory and honour*; that He, who was condemned to death before an earthly tribunal, will again come to sit in judgment upon the whole human race, and to *reward every man according to his works*; that He, whose body and blood were the sacrifice, now pleads its sufficiency, as the great High Priest, and Intercessor for our sins; are truths as clearly revealed in scripture as that He was to have been *born of a Virgin*, or that He was to have been *wounded for our transgressions*, and cut off, *not for himself*, but that, by the means of his death, He might *bring us to God*. But as these, although not distinctly conceived by those to whom they were made known from afar by promise and by prophecy, were yet expected by them in humility and faith;

so now the life to come, a resurrection, and a future judgment, though the mighty price be already paid, rest all on promise also, and are articles of faith to us, which as far surpass our powers of explanation.

In our conception, however, of that blessedness which awaits an obedience to the faith, we are not left unassisted by the Holy Apostle, who describes those scenes of future bliss with a rapture that seems to indicate more than a prophetic view. Contemplating, therefore, the progressive appeal which religion has made by miracles to the senses of man; inferring, in faith, from what has happened, what will as surely come to pass; assuring ourselves from prophecies accomplished, and promises performed, that *He is faithful who promised, and that his word shall never pass away;* let us commit our imaginations to the Apostle's guidance, and with him humbly approach that throne of glory on which our Redeemer sitteth, fulfilling every promise made to his church, and proving himself to be the *strength of his people*, and *their portion for ever*. Let us anticipate our final change

and transition through his blood, from darkness to light, from death to life, from sin to holiness, and to an union with Him *who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

Ye are come, then, says the Apostle, *unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living* God, *the heavenly Jerusalem.* As our arrival at mount Sion is put into contrast with the trembling approach of Moses and the Israelites to the mount from which the law was given, we must naturally infer, that instead of encountering the terrors of darkness and tempest, or of a voice dismaying the spirit of all who heard it, *the hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth, and that* God *is known in her palaces for a refuge*:—that as from Sinai a law was promulged, by which *no man is justified in the sight of* God, so now from Sion in the last days, comes forth a law proclaiming forgiveness to all that believe, and justification by faith in Jesus Christ from all things *from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.* For *the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did;* a hope that is the refuge and anchor of the soul, *by which we draw nigh to*

God. But, together with all nations that flow to the mountain of the Lord's house to learn his ways and to walk in his paths, we are now come to the King who is set upon his holy hill of Sion; and what is the blessed result of our confident approach to Him *in full assurance of faith?* Mercy to our unrighteousness, to our sins and iniquity oblivion; *For I, even I am he, saith the Lord, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

They were to come also unto *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*—here contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem, for the sake of carrying on the comparison between the legal bondage and the liberty of the gospel, the covenants of the law and of the promise. Of that great and glorious city, wherein *the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are to be the temple of it;* of the work of God by his Holy Spirit, *in which it pleaseth Him to dwell;* of the dominion and kingdom of his Saviour upon earth, when he shall *set his throne upon the holy hill of Sion;* the christian may surely, under the safe warrant of prophecy, be allowed to apply the several images to the state of the church tri-

umphant, *when God shall be in the midst of her*, and *she shall not be moved; when God shall help her, when the morning appeareth.* But whether these blessed intimations are to be literally accomplished, or whether they are all to be absorbed in the possession of heavenly glory, *though very excellent things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God*, we may rest satisfied of one felicity to be there enjoyed by the faithful followers of our Redeemer—for *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.*

But on their arrival there they were to be welcomed by *an innumerable company of angels*, to be enrolled with them as fellow-servants and fellow-citizens under one head; nor can we reflect on the various offices which have been assigned to them in behalf of mankind, without anticipating our admission among them with exceeding joy. *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round them that fear God*, and him they have in charge who maketh God *his refuge;* they minister to such as are *heirs of salvation.* By angels the patriarchs were accompanied and

conducted; by the disposition of angels the law was received; by angels the birth of our Redeemer was predicted; and by *the whole host of Heaven* the *tidings of great joy* were announced, and hailed as resulting in *Glory to God in the highest*, and *good-will towards men;* by angels his resurrection was attended; and by angels, who witnessed his ascension, his return in like manner is foretold. When, therefore, we behold Him *come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him;* when we hear them sent *to gather together his elect from the four winds*, and find ourselves among the accepted number; from their predicted strains of gratitude to Him who has *redeemed mankind to God by his blood*, we may well infer our happy reception by these gracious witnesses of our final judgment; and from the strains of our own gratitude, though we cannot specify, we may calculate upon that boundless felicity with which we shall be excited with them, to ascribe *blessing and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

We shall next find, as we approach mount Sion, that holy hill rendered accessible, and surrounded

by *a general assmbly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.* When GOD proposed to deliver his people from the bondage of Egypt, he called Israel his son, his first-born. This adoption seems, therefore, to be referred to here; and as Israel was *holiness to the Lord, the first-fruits of his increase,* so all whom He begetteth by the word of truth, are a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, first-fruits to GOD and the Lamb, *redeemed from among men,* and *in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.* When we see the Almighty blot out the name of the disobedient Israelite from the book that he has written, and observe the contrasted statement of the covenant which succeeded to the accomplished law, it will follow, that the name of every man of every nation who is faultless before GOD, is written up in the records of Him, in whom (as the first-born of every creature) the adoption of every creature is comprised; and consequently, the retrospective adoption of all who had *obtained a good report through faith,* may well be looked for in the book of life of *the Lamb slain from the founda-*

tion of the world. Here, then, we may hope to meet our first repentant parents; the father of an emerging world; the father of the people of GOD; the lawgiver of that people; together with all who believed in the promises, and in that law which vanished only in its own completion.

But we are not only associated with these selected subjects of the first covenant, we are now brought into the presence of GOD *the Judge of all*; not the judge of one people only, but of all the earth; *before whom shall be gathered all nations*, and because of whom *all kindreds of the earth shall wail;* but before whom his faithful people shall stand accepted, and who, no longer under the accusation of Moses, judging by the law all who have sinned in the law, but judging the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained, and who was on the third day perfected by sufferings, unites us also to the spirits of just (or rather justified) men made perfect; *by whom the promises were not received, to the end that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Such is the language of the Apostle, who thus makes our constancy in the faith of the

gospel the source of that perfection, which, having been deferred to the gathering together of all things, will then accrue to its stedfast followers; not as individuals, but as fellow-servants, who, having been in every age partakers of the sufferings of Christ, now in the final revelation of his glory, when the everlasting doors are opened, come to *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.* Not to Moses, the typical mediator of a temporary covenant, which only pointed to those means of grace and immortality which it could not itself supply, but to Jesus, who for this cause is the mediator of the new and better testament; that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance; to Jesus Christ, who through the suffering of death is now crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of GOD, should taste death for every man, and as a merciful high-priest, obtain, by the offering of his own blood, eternal redemption for us.

To this sanctifying sacrifice are we come—we are come also to the *blood of sprinkling*, and

hear the mighty satisfaction pleaded in our behalf. Instead of the voice of Abel's blood which cried from the ground to GOD, and called down a curse upon his brother's head, the blood of the cross speaks better things, repeals the curse, atchieves the subjugation of sin and death, and vanquishing the enemy, alone compasses our peace, procures our access, and by its eternal mediation effects our reconciliation unto GOD.

With what unlimited gratitude, with how profoundly-solemn a dedication of our whole souls, must we therefore adore that Mercy, which, having appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, now appears in Heaven before GOD for us; and as a High Priest over the house of GOD, having purchased remission of sin, has given us boldness by faith to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. With angels and arch-angels, therefore, and with all the company of Heaven; with the elders, who under the persuasion of faith embraced the distant promises; and with those first-fruits unto GOD and the Lamb, the accepted servants of GOD in all the tribes of the children of Israel; let us also, who constitute the great and happy mul-

titude which has been washed, and sanctified, and redeemed to God, by the blood of the Lamb, out of every people and nation, having now attained to the continuing city of the living God, unite our uplifted voices, and ascribe to God, and unto the Lamb, *which stood on mount Sion, and is in the midst of the throne, salvation and blessing, thanksgiving and glory, and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Thus we see that the Apostle, in vindicating the claims of Christianity against the zealots of the law, does it not by dividing the two dispensations, but by resolving them into parts of one compacted whole. The law was in general a shadow of good things to come, and each specific institution had its correspondent reality in the gospel. Without shedding of blood there is no remission; by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ our sins are obliterated, and remission is offered to all men. The introductory type conferred a claim to the benefits of its counterpart performance; and when they are, as here, conferred upon the faithful subject of the law, we find the great Leader of our salvation still figured by the paschal type which pre-

ceded his advent, and therefore still denominated the Lamb of God. Even such an opposition as leads to a necessary comparison of two dispensations, bestows a prophetic character upon the former. Thus, by the ministration of death and condemnation, which was to be done away, the ministration of permanent righteousness, and of the spirit which giveth an unchangeable life, is prefigured.

Such are the excellency and inestimable privileges of the gospel dispensation, to which every preceding covenant had a reference, and from the substantial realities of which the patriarchal and legal shadows derived their institution, and believers at all times every benefit.

With these considerations does the Apostle encourage the Hebrews under the trial they then endured; and having obviated the insinuations and objections of those who confided in their legal ceremonies, he converts the gospel covenant into an argument of consolation and support under all the difficulties and persecutions that threatened the believer in Christ; he carries its conditions into another world, and brings its rewards before an heavenly tribunal. Wholly

taken up with what shall be hereafter, he anticipates the glory that shall be revealed with such animating hope, that his language, carried on by the sublime train of his conceptions, produces as it were an inspired account and inventory of the saints' estate and inheritance. He directs the christian's eye to this blessed sight and enjoyment, and almost makes the transported soul partake of his beatific vision.

Ye are come, says he, (to repeat his own words) *unto mount Sion, and to the city of the living* God, *the heavenly Jerusalem—and to an innumerable company of angels—to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven—and to* God, *the judge of all—and to the spirits of just men made perfect—and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant—and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.*

With such a blissful society in view, it was natural that he should have a longing desire to burst the prison walls of his body, and to join his immortal associates; and though chained, as we are, by many necessary demands, to the affairs of this life, we may, and perhaps it is

kindly ordained that we should, want much of this extatic ardour; yet with these glorious effects of his faith duly considered, the hour of his departure would be to every Christian the time of his enlargement. Waiting for and confiding in the promised reward, he would bow his head in peace; and looking up, like St. Stephen, to his glorified Redeemer, and to those arms of mercy ready to receive him, he would cry out in triumph, *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is victory?*

After the enumeration of these blessings, the Apostle thus concludes:—*See then, that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. His voice,* says he, appealing to their own law, *has already shaken the earth;* but now he hath promised, saying, *Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also Heaven. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve* God *acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our* God *is a consuming fire.*

This also must be the conclusion of every Christian minister's exhortation; and if we have any faith in the promises of the Gospel, this will be the accomplishment of the great

and glorious things which yet remain to be fulfilled. We have endeavoured to shew you, how the free gift and providences of Christ's redemption have been carried on through various periods, down to the present time; we have exhibited proofs that not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath spoken concerning his church; and we have set in view a great cloud of witnesses to confirm the important truth, that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* His humanity began at his incarnation, his divinity is from everlasting. Both have been exerted for the salvation of his people; the one has manifested his power, the other has veiled it in mercy. Divest our blessed Lord of his divinity, and you take away the merit of the cross, the efficacy of atonement, and the consolation of the penitent. Allow Him to be only an inspired prophet, born in the fulness of time to teach and to confirm his doctrine by a holy example and a painful death, and you rank Him, with a small shade of difference, among many other illustrious prophets and martyrs, whose offices are long since concluded, and who are gone to

meet their reward. Granting, therefore, that He pointed out the true road, how is He to interfere upon earth for their salvation? How is He *with them to the end of the world*? How is He *the author and finisher of their faith?* How is He *the Prince of all the kings of the earth?* How is He *the head of all principality and power?* How is He *the Lord both of the dead and the living?* And if *He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet,* whoever refuses his authority, now He is *gone into a far country* to take possession of a kingdom, do they not literally resist his sceptre, saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

If we are Christians, we belong to that divine building of God, which has been the subject of our discourses during the season of Advent, and in which our wish has been to conduct you up the various steps, by which God has raised it from the first foundation to the topmost stone. We are a part of the glorious work of salvation carried on from age to age; we are connected with every dispensation of grace towards fallen mankind; Christ and his redemption is the great subject of the prophecies, as well as of the songs

of the Old Testament; and the moral rules and precepts are all given as having their foundation with him. Christ and his redemption are also the great subject of the history of the Old Testament; and even the history of the creation is an introduction to the history of redemption, which immediately followed. In short, the whole bible is a recorded attestation of Him, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; the history of his church, of his kingdom, and his people. All is filled with the Gospel, only with this difference—that the Old Testament contains the Gospel under a veil, but the New contains it unveiled, so that *we may see the glory of the Lord with open face.*

But, my brethren, there is still another consideration to which we are awakened by the apostolic admonition. That state of things to which he refers, is called *a New Heaven and a New Earth*; and though reaching to the end of time, is only in him a repetition of the prophetic promise, *Behold I create a New Heaven and a New Earth,* and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind; but be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; *For*

behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. For as the New Heavens and New Earth which I make still remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain. If this expression be made typical of our Saviour's advent, and the establishing of a spiritual worship on the destruction of the carnal ordinances of the law, and the altars of Heathen idolatry, it cannot wholly relate to it; for as yet the Jewish nation have only to mourn the destruction of their Jerusalem. It must therefore be typical of another state of things, wholly figurative to us, but which we know will be accompanied with an advancement of the church into that state of the glorious prevalence of truth, liberty, peace, and joy, of which we so often read in the prophetical parts of scripture, and which will close with the advancement of the church to consummate glory in Heaven.

What momentary triumphs may yet be permitted to the ungodly, and what trials may await the faithful, are hidden from us in the womb of time. It is true we have seen our Deliverer, but we still await in expectation of our deliverance. We have been rescued from bondage, but are still

travelling through the wilderness of this world to a land of rest. We have known our Redeemer, but we still are ignorant of the fullness of his redemption. So far as the kingdom of Christ is set up in the world, so far is the world brought to its end, and the eternal state of things established; so far are all the great changes and revolutions of the world brought to their ultimate issue. But the opposition to his kingdom has not ceased; and the spirit of Antichrist, under every form, must rage upon the earth, before, by the last and fatal overthrow of his enemies, the machinations of Satan shall all be turned into occasions of triumph—before Christ shall appear to fulfil every promise to the faithful, and to pour down vengeance upon all the despisers of his name.

In an age like the present, and in the present temper of our times, we can hardly speak of these things without fear and trembling. And when an unrestrained wildness of human imagination is let loose against the sober and sure knowledge of the holy scriptures; when a speculative atheism is running down all serious religion, and a Christian people is familiar

with every instruction, but that which is derived from the word of God; to see so many without Christ, without God in the world; and to be assured of the terrible judgments that will overtake them—is among the painful duties of useless exhortation.

But however the plan of his mercy may be slighted, it is still our part to persevere, and to proclaim, that the same divine testimony which compels an universal acknowledgment of the one true God and Father of all, at the same time bears witness to the majesty and perfect fullness of his Son Jesus Christ; that the same testimony which sets that Son in opposition to idols, demands our lowliest reverence to Him in unity with the Father; that it calls reason home from her wanderings in a wilderness where no path is to be found, and shews her, by the light of faith, that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can come to the Father; that in Jesus Christ alone, *who of God is made unto his kingdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,* a world condemned and *dead in sin* can find forgiveness and renewal of life. Upon a belief in this testimony alone shall we

be enabled to feel its value or to prove its truth; the scriptures of GOD afford the only immoveable ground of our confidence, the sole foundation of our consolatory hope, and that bond of peace, of brotherly love and charity, which may not be untied by the changes and chances of this mortal life. From the ineffectual *wisdom of this world* let us therefore return to Christ the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD. Believing in Him who is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*—in Him *which is, and which was, and which is to come*, the ALMIGHTY—let us *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, and finally through his mercies may we receive the end of our faith, even *the salvation of our souls*.

SERMON VI.

PSALM lxxiv. 9.

We see not our signs.

TAKING the Holy Scriptures for our guide, we have been employed in following the train of human events from the creation to the dissolution of all things; and without bringing examples from the Heathen world which knew not GOD, in the very bosom of his revelation, and among the people of his choice, our examination has proved a painful history of man's ingratitude and disobedience. Under every state of his trial and dependance we have seen the covenant of love and the conditions of pardon disregarded, broken, or despised; and with judgments forgotten, with mercies slighted, with blessings abused, with time squandered, and with talents unimproved, have hours, days, and years

passed over thoughtless ages, filling up the sum of their iniquity, or charged with little accusation against their guilty proceedings.

But amidst the signal punishments inflicted, whilst states and empires have been trodden down, and it may be said of nations, as the Psalmist reported of the ungodly, *I went by, and lo he was gone; I sought him, but his place could no where be found—He who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,* appears at the head of human affairs. The vicissitudes of times, the changes of power, the elevation and overthrow of empires, in short, all the plans of human counsels, and the whole series of earthly events, instead of lying in a confused and obscure mass, are shewn us by the light of revelation as so many parts of the great work of redemption; and the scriptures, exhibiting in sundry chastisements and corrections, in the fall and ruin of its enemies, the perpetuity of God's mercy to his church and people, are only waiting their ultimate completion, when *the kingdom of Christ shall be extended to all nations,* and *all the ends of the earth shall look unto Christ, and be saved.*

We have, my brethren, again concluded another annual period of our lives; and like those which have gone before, it has brought every one of us so much farther onwards in our journey towards the grave. With a respective application, therefore, of the text to every individual, it may be asked, what preparations the Christian traveller has made for the remainder of his way, what strength he may have acquired to endure its increasing hardships? To what guide he has adhered for directions, and what provision he has made for its awful close? We might then bid many look back on the paths they had trodden, and if there they too frequently find and lament their own deviations from the way on which GOD had shed forth the light of his word, and the obstacles that have thence impeded their feeble advances, on such we have only to call for greater vigilance, and more exerted vigour, to gird up the loins of their mind, and seek diligently to walk henceforward there alone, where the Sun of Righteousness will guide their feet into the way of peace.

But to many, I fear, we should have to pronounce the sharper admonitions of the Gospel.

Have they, busy about many things, neglected the one thing needful; and occupied by the interests of this transitory world, declined to cultivate the interests of eternity? Have they appealed from the voice of God to the suggestions of their own brief intellect, and preferred the sway of their own predominant passions to the easy yoke of their meek and lowly Redeemer? Have they witnessed, without instruction, the signs and warnings of surrounding mortality, and beheld their associates snatched suddenly to their last account, without thinking of the talents for which they themselves are to be responsible? And shall we, who are equally appointed to denounce the sanctions, as to preach the promises of the Gospel, acquiesce in the ruinous delusion? Have they, then, thus spoken peace to their own souls—*Verily, saith my God, there is no peace to the wretched?* Have they thus anticipated the grave as a place of final rest? When the Almighty shall come to judgment, then *all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and come forth;* and as *they that have done good shall come to the resurrection of life,*

so *they that have done evil shall come into the resurrection of damnation.*

But although the real and important concern of man, as an individual, is necessarily transacted within the boundary of his own earthly duration; though in his separate character, his vices and his virtues, in this his state of probation, are to plunge him into misery, or to qualify him for eternal felicity; yet connected as he is with society, the actions of his life become relative also, and consequently form, on his part, a contribution to the character of his country, a contribution to the public vices or virtues, on which, from the history of his dispensations, we know that the Almighty has conferred his blessings, or inflicted his national judgments.

At the expiration of one, and the commencement of another year, the mind is naturally led at once to contemplate events and probabilities, and from the existence of the past, to infer to the future progress of human society. Without, therefore, stretching back the view to the recorded periods of the world, how ample is the lesson which even the little space, over which

we have passed ourselves, affords us. And whilst the portentous posture of human affairs holds out their frowning signals, let us humbly listen to the voice of God, speaking thus intelligibly to all nations; and turning to Him as a Christian people, obtain from his pacified mercy our exemption from seeing in their penalty, our own signs.

We know, or at least we profess to know, what is essential to the very existence of a Christian community. We are made acquainted with the means of its security, and the terms of its preservation; and to apply our text to its most valuable purpose, we should bring the existence of former ages to decide upon our own opinions and our own times. We must lay aside that political balance, which never weighs the morals of a people; we must descend from that philosophic pride which gives to the wisdom of this world an haughty pre-eminence; and taught to measure our happiness by a juster standard, as brethren and friends living under the same laws, and unanimously desiring those things which tend to the common advantage, we must see how much we are wanting in that fear and

love of God, and that obedient dedication of the heart and soul, to which alone he has annexed the promise of his public temporary blessings.

From scenes long since buried in oblivion, from the tombs of departed greatness, and from the monumental records of antient glory, we might possibly only furnish a general conclusion on the instability of human affairs; and whole empires swept from the earth, like the graves on which they daily tread with unconcern, would afford to many no subject of reflection. In vain would they be told, that although *Babylon which did weaken the nations, be fallen*, another Babylon still remains; and that God will again *lay low the haughtiness of the terrible*. In vain would they be told, that although Tyre and Sidon, *whose merchants were princes*, and whose traffickers were *the honourable of the earth*, be no more, their judgment is also gone forth against other cities abundant in treasures, when they too shall have filled up the measure of their iniquities. Disdaining prophecy, or dreading its interpretation, they would give to it no appropriate meaning, or quiet their fears

by disclaiming the right of decision upon any unaccomplished event.

Supposing, then, these signs to be too vague and indefinite for any peculiar application; or that being exhibited to all the nations upon earth, they bear no distinct mark of any particular society or kingdom; is there not one that cannot be mistaken by a Christian people, and which the Almighty has placed, like a *beacon on a hill,* to warn succeeding generations? Has the Virgin the daughter of Zion, once fair and glorious, but now *forsaken and wasted with misery,* no tale to unfold, that would give us an explanation of national calamities? Have the once-chosen people of God, now in this actual time of their visitation, no other instruction to offer, than what may be gathered from the perishing condition of all human grandeur? Or when she sits down by the waters of other Babylons, and weeps, does she not cry aloud to the Israel of God—Learn wisdom by my fall?

If the chastisements of other nations, and the sad memorials of their ruin, do not furnish evidence that the Governor of the Universe will not be insulted with impunity, and of what will

befal every rebellious people upon earth, till the kingdom of righteousness be established, the single portrait of the Jewish nation, drawn by the hand of GOD himself, presents a resemblance too strongly marked with the characteristic features of a Christian Society. They were his beloved people—his chosen inheritance—his favourites, whom He had separated unto himself from all nations; among whom He had fixed his church, and of whose holy city it was said, *GOD is her tower of defence, GOD is in the midst of her.* If a *corrupt and perverse generation* should again *ask for a sign,* what greater than this can be given? A Saviour's mercy has bestowed upon us all these titles; a Saviour's goodness has transferred to us these their inestimable privileges. Rescued from idolatrous bondage, and placed and protected in this our land of Canaan, a gratitude and obedience proportionate to these benefits is required of us; and if, like them, we fail in our bounden duty and service, like them we shall be no longer for *a name and for a praise, and for a glory,* but our heritage will be given into *the hands of our enemies,* and *our pleasant portion*

be made a desolate wilderness. Was the land of Judea invaded? Was Jerusalem trodden down? And is it no question with a Christian people, how long they may experience the forbearance of their GOD? Are we more dear to Him than they were? Can there be stronger expressions of love, than those of a despised and rejected Saviour in his lamentation over their devoted city? *Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killedst the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate.* And if the whole of this prediction has been verified with the most awful and literal completion; if the Almighty has broken down the hedge with which he inclosed and defended their vineyard; is there no cause for fear, lest he should suffer the wild boar to root up, and the wild beasts of the forest to enter in, and lay waste ours? Nay, with a dreadful presage of such an event, may it not be said, and almost without a metaphor, that they are now watching and howling around us.

Should we look for the cause of their misfortunes in the decline of piety, and consequent corruption of manners; in the prevalence of licentious principles, which, boldly renouncing both law and religion, left nothing to the church of God but the name of his temple and the external forms of worship, how nearly shall we find in the historian of their times, the iniquity of the present day! Or could the apprehensions of a Christian people, if they acknowledged or dreaded the just judgments of Heaven, be more powerfully excited by the peculiarity of guilt, or a similarity of provocation? With a daring defiance of every restraint, how have the laws and legal powers been insulted or despised? With no corrective influence, how vainly have the Scriptures spoken to a disobedient people? Till, by a natural process of the human mind, which, having once brought itself to disregard, soon begins to dispute and question their authority, impiety and blasphemy have not only been publicly proclaimed from the press, but become a traffic of profit, in a country of religious hope and persuasion. Nay, when the public worship of the Almighty is forsaken and disrespected,

and the day which He hallowed to his own glory, and for our salvation, is profaned; when we partake of that terrible accusation, which the Almighty produces against his people, that whilst the young men assembled by troops in the harlots' houses, and the adultress scorned to be ashamed, they would stand before Him in his presence, and declare their hope to be in his name; may we not from similar crimes with trembling look out for similar visitations? Did then the Christian dispensation, which lightened the burden of the Mosaic ritual, diminish the force of its moral injunctions? Has the superstructure of holiness weakened the foundation? *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-Day*—Has this solemn command now lost every claim to observance or respect? Or is the inscription written by the finger of GOD on tables of stone, erased in the institution of the Gospel covenant? Have we no sacrifice to offer, no commemorative mercies to acknowledge, no ordinances to observe? And is the Lord's-Day wholly exempt from those awful words, which now proclaim the origin of the greatest miseries that ever befel a wretched people—*If thou turn away thy*

foot from the sabbath, from doing my pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight—the holy of the LORD, *honourable, and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, not finding thine own pleasure, nor seeking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the* LORD; *and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the* LORD *hath spoken it.—But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath-day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, and it shall not be quenched.* Such are the blessings promised to a due observance of the sabbath, such are the curses denounced against the breach of it, and both have been literally accomplished. But how do we read our signs? Why, we never place them honestly before us, or we endeavour to escape from their meaning by evasive subterfuges. We put from us the evil day, by having recourse to the genius of our government, the wholesomeness of its laws, the prudence of its administration, and the extent of its resources. Thus times and seasons, warnings and punishments, roll on be-

fore eyes that will not see, and speak to ears that will not hear; and resolving all into secondary causes, we forget Him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, who maketh princes, empires, and subjects subservient to one almighty purpose, and before whom all nations are as nothing; whose word has gone forth—*The earth itself shall wax old as a garment, as a vesture will I change it, and it shall be changed; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*

Of all the denunciations of woe recorded in scripture, the most terrible are those which are pronounced against ingratitude and disobedience. Infidel and idolatrous nations, having served their destined purpose, have been destroyed and swept away from among men; but the vengeance that was to pursue the rebellious children of his love, the whole of which was foretold by their own inspired lawgiver, and only detailed in its separate parts by succeeding Prophets; which also, in progressive accomplishment, is visiting or has overtaken them in the face of all people—is a narrative of horror, that if in any of its particulars we were to apply

to ourselves, would fill us with fear and trembling. Must then the stroke arrive before we will see the uplifted arm? Must we fall into the pit that our sins are digging for us, without once considering its depth or its danger? If the history of the Jews were written for our example, read their mercies, and the cause of their misfortunes; with a prophetic spirit they are all set forth by Moses in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, wherein he says—*The* LORD'S *portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desart land, and in the waste howling wilderness: He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, and beareth them on her wings, so the* LORD *alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou*

didst drink the pure blood of the grape. But Jeshurim waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God *which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.*

Can we be such unequal judges in our own case, as not to see, in their trial and condemnation, the fatal sentence of a Christian people? Change only for a moment the figurative language, and mark how similar the reasoning is against us, how aggravated our provocation. Suppose, then, the God of the universe, the Lord, *who hath redeemed us with his blood*, summoning us, as he did them, to answer the charge—Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned; or suppose him only to say, *Son of man, wilt thou judge them, and cause them to know their abominations.* How are we prepared to answer accusations like these?

If God has placed every blessing within our reach, consistent with our earthly state; if He has given us a country, temperate in its climate, exuberant in its soil, exulting in its liberty, and flourishing in its commerce; if, having written his law and his commandments within

our hearts, He has guarded by his protection, and sanctified by his presence, our holy temples, *the place where his honour dwelleth;* if, having removed from us the scourge of the oppressor, He has fixed the pillars of our government on the foundation of religious truth; if, after grafting us on the parent stock, He has caused our branches to flourish, that they might spread around the fruits of righteousness; if He has made of us a wise, a great, and enlightened people, that his name through us might be exalted, and that in our dominion He might be glorified in the sight of all nations; Why have we forgotten the Hand from which we have received all these blessings; why have we defiled the land of our inheritance; and why do the insulted laws of our GOD rise up before him, to upbraid us with apostacy and ingratitude?

Of those pollutions, which must banish from the heart every religious hope; of those licentious principles, which set Almighty Power at defiance, and consequently separate from human actions the care of an all-seeing Providence; of the dissipation, gaming, riot, and debauchery, which abound among us, and which so fully confirm

the charge; of their consequent attendants, sin, rebuke, and blasphemy, which with impudent defiance have set up their banners for tokens;—we can only say, *by their fruits ye may know them.* And had we no other witnesses of the truth to shame and confound such false brethren, what a fearful looking-for of judgment would remain to us! But amidst the irregularities of life, which force us to shut our eyes, or to hush our consciences, whilst we hear the stream of infidelity roaring in its widened channel, and behold so many thoughtless beings feeding the currents and swelling the rivulets of folly and guilt, to augment the rapidity of the destructive torrent, though we may not be able to oppose a mound, it is our duty to bid you mark its progress, and to dread its approach; it is our duty to turn your eyes towards the ravages of the storm, and to exhort you to examine well the ground of your security, whether, *should the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow,* they will beat in vain upon your house, because *it is founded on a rock.*

Shall we then be taught to comprehend our signs, as the danger approaches nearer? And

from the distinct word of revelation, from the full and final completion of prophetic warning, and from the destruction of nations now erased from the face of the earth, shall we turn with more profitable admonition to the calamitous scenes around us? Shall we, at the close of a century, terminating with horror, yet fraught with mercy, learn to estimate the value of our blessings in the presence of our GOD? Shall we, in taking the catalogue of wretchedness from other nations, be taught to raise up our voice in thanksgiving to the throne of grace, that our country has not been delivered over a prey to the spoiler, nor made a field of blood?

By the interposition of Providence we have been placed on a noble eminence; and I know and feel, that when the pulse beats high to national honour in signal atchievements of genius and courage, when this little island is made, as it were, the ark and the resting-place of social morality and legitimate freedom, the lesson of humility is difficult. But with the groaning of nations humbled to the dust, who but lately prided themselves, like our own, on the order of their government and the greatness of their

resources, the very song of deliverance must be a song of apprehension; it must expose the slender thread of, what is called, national prosperity; and through the vapour of glory will be distinctly seen the significant token, that nothing can long hold together a happy people, but the strong bonds of Christian faith, of Christian hope, and of Christian obligations.

Protected, therefore, as this kingdom has been, by the gracious Hand of Heaven, does it not become us to be humble as well as grateful? Should we not ask ourselves upon whom the vial of indignation has been poured, and who have been made to drink so deeply of the cup of affliction? Oh God of mercy, let us not dare to suppose, that, upon a moral and religious comparison our foundation of trust is stronger than that of many who have fallen; let us not venture to pronounce *I am holier than thou*, or that we ourselves might not have as justly shared a portion of their sad inheritance! In tracing the boundaries of their once fraternized dominions, as they were termed by the insulting foe, shall we find nothing within them that ought to have checked the hand of spoliation? Were

there no constituted authorities—no protecting laws—no charitable succours—no peaceful submission—no revered principles—no affectionate ties—to deprecate the experiments of these infuriate plunderers? Was the arrogant title of the *Great Nation* deservedly written with the blood, and deservedly decorated with the property, the resources, the claims, and distinctions, of these unhappy kingdoms? Of one country, once possessed of every earthly happiness, let me be excused for speaking with painful recollection. In the plain of ambition, in the struggle for power, in the search after wealth, there may be some plausible pretext for the bloody triumph, which may be dignified with the warrior's praise, or mocked with the sanction of freedom's banners. But the desolation of the Alpine vallies strikes a terror to the heart; their forms of government, their modes of legislation, their character, their education, and manners, were all cast in the fairest moulds of freedom; they had nothing to ask, but the undisturbed possession of enjoyments, which had grown out of the virtuous habits of industry and content, and which had rendered their confined domi-

nions, and their own domestic claims, at once their glory and their consolation. It may, perhaps, be trespassing a little beyond the limits of a discourse from this place, to enter into these particulars; but from a country of peace, of love, of civil order, and religious dependence; from a country, we have seen, rich like our own in the choicest blessings, and even removed from many of its vices; from a country, to which, it should seem, that the prophetic language might almost be applied—*the kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world could not have believed, that the adversary should have entered her gates*; from such a country, overwhelmed with destruction, the reflection we wish to impress upon your hearts will be awfully striking; and from a lamentation over its smoaking ruins, we shall duly prize the value of our own preservation.

We are not presenting you with an imaginary tale of woe, nor producing the probable effects of licentious confusion among us; the dreadful consummation has been verified to our sight, and what reason and religion bid us expect, fact has realised, with every circumstance of horrid

completion. Renouncing, therefore, every presumptuous decision, our duty is to contemplate these signs, and to acquaint ourselves with the sentence already gone forth upon every kingdom:—*Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the* LORD GOD. The threat and the accomplishment are now before us, and we have been signally protected and preserved. Shall we, then, hide from our hearts the instructive admonition? Shall we not ask them, what we have done to be excluded from the number of wretched victims? Shall we still refuse to interweave the fate of empires with that of religion, and close the century with some proud encomium on our national valour, or with some profound remarks on our political superiority?

If such be to be the issue of the mercies we have experienced, the time of our visitation is already decreed, our destruction already sealed.

Built on the foundation of those revelations which were given to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and the Prophets, the church of Christ from age to age, from century to century, has verified the promise of her almighty Saviour—*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* However she may have suffered, or be ordained to suffer, under temporary corrections, *the things that cannot be shaken, will remain.* Even her adversaries, who are permitted to rule for the chastisement of the disobedient or the purification of the just, are only raised up to display the future triumphs of her glorious Leader, when He that *spake in righteousness, mighty to save,* shall with his own arm bring salvation unto his people; when He shall dash their enemies in pieces, and having accomplished the number of his elect, and the year of his redeemed being come, He shall appear in the character of *King of kings, and Lord of lords,* to claim dominion over his chosen, and to incorporate all (excepting those who have renounced his authority) into his kingdom upon earth, that they may become one fold under one shepherd.

From the creation to the dissolution of all things, every event has been preparatory to the great and eternal work of GOD to be effected in Christ Jesus; and History and Prophecy conspire to shew how far it has advanced towards its full and ultimate completion. We have seen the three dispensations, as they are called, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian—(each in its allotted period, and with its destined purpose) preparing the way for a Redeemer's advent, and producing earnests of his future glory. The policy of states, the destiny of empires, the shifting scenes of earthly grandeur, are the subordinate parts, which men have acted, and which the mercy of GOD has made instrumental to his providential designs. In the Scripture History, therefore, and in that alone, have we a just comment upon human affairs, for *He that ruleth in the kingdoms of men,* can alone account for the power that He giveth, or taketh away. But it is by searching them out, by pondering and weighing them in all their circumstances, that the works of the LORD are known, *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

Thus in expectation of the promised Redeemer, the Christian only sees, in the greatness of the Roman empire, the appointed time, when enriched by the various streams of science, which flowed into it from every part, it was to give the most illustrious proof of a Saviour's advent, by his diffusing over the world a light superior to all collected human wisdom in its brightest glory. In its subsequent decay and dissolution he leaves the Historian to decide on the probable causes of its fall, but observing the fragments into which it was broken, and watching the spirit of Antichrist busy at the work, which it began in the garden of Eden, (and which the Apostle, when he would caution us against it, states as being then already in the world) he beholds it assuming only new forms, employing new devices, and even changing the mark of the beast to suit the temper and disposition of his proselytes; he beholds the malicious destroyer of the human race, from dreading more and more the overthrow of his kingdom, as the danger approaches nearer, drawing into it every opposer of the Christian faith, and then sending them forth in all di-

rections to falsify the word of GOD, to corrupt its purity, to blaspheme the name of Christ, or to deny his existence.

It is against these subtle machinations that the church of Christ is exhorted to be on her guard. It is in these latter times, when she is told to expect *false prophets and false teachers, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and who, with great swelling words of vanity, shall beguile unstable souls from the right way*, that she is more peculiarly called upon to *watch and pray, lest she enter into temptation.*

With her is deposited the word of truth; within her holy sanctuary are preserved the covenant of mercy, the privileges of adoption, the right of inheritance, the ministration unto *all things pertaining unto GOD*, and the symbols of her eternal and atoning Redeemer.

Let her, then, *hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* Her signs are written from generation to generation, and the Eastern church, debased by corruptions, divided by heresies, and then delivered up to persecution, presents at this moment a monument of woe, on which, if she keep not the word, the Western church

may read the inscription of her own approaching calamities.

Be watchful, says the Spirit unto one of them, *and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before* GOD.

Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

With this admonition before us, waiting for the glorious consummation of the redemption of our purchased possession, may we be found faithful, may we hold fast by that everlasting Saviour without whom man had fallen for ever, who has *loved him with an everlasting love*, who at all times and in all places has given us tokens of it; who has commanded us to read our signs, and under every discouraging event to trust in Him, who shall redeem his people.

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PAGE 4. LINE 10.

AND disjoin the evangelical blessings from every former act of GOD's interfering providence, &c.

I AM aware of the objections that will be raised against these arguments by many, who, with a full and perfect acquiescence in scripture authority, and allowing Christ, in his divine and human character, to have realized every promise, and to have corresponded with every prophetic signification, are yet doubtful, how far the blessings of a Redeemer's kingdom may have been made known in former ages, or whether the great Mediatorial undertaking, and the doctrines of the resurrection, were not hidden in darkness, till the day-star arose above the horizon. They do not deny the retrospective influence of Christi-

anity, and are firmly persuaded, that the benefits of a Saviour's death will be extended backwards to those who never heard of his coming, and by whom he was neither foreseen nor foreknown. Thus, without weakening the efficacy of atonement, they contend, that however clear the revelation of a Redeemer's glory might have been made to Abraham, and some other favoured servants of GOD, still the expectation of such an event was not general; and that in the belief of the great bulk of mankind, the promises and threatenings of scripture all terminated in this life. The tenet, though maintained by authority, and rendered the foundation of a stupendous fabric of learning, entitled to the most profound respect, I am, nevertheless, unable to adopt; nor can I resist the evidence of the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, which presents us with a catalogue of pious expectants and sufferers, *who all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them and embraced them.* Hebrews xi. 13. I am constrained to accede to the testimony of the same Apostle, who, in justification of himself before Felix, and who, be it remembered, made the Roman governor tremble, as he reasoned of a judgment to come, turns the charge of his accusers against themselves, as being apostates from the received faith and religion of their ancestors. *Neither can they prove the things,* says he, *whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the* GOD

of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; And have hope towards God, *which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and unjust.*—Acts xxiv. 14. This point of doctrine, therefore, was not a new one, nor peculiar to Christianity. The Apostle argues upon it as upon the derivative faith of their ancestors; and in another place takes advantage of this very belief, with the hopes (and in which he fully succeeds) of gaining a party in his favour. When he was brought before the council, which consisted of Pharisees and Sadducees, both of whom were equally adverse to Christianity, he appeals to the former not only as being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, but as one that was unjustly persecuted for opinions which they held sacred—*Of the hope*, says he, *and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.* Nay, our Saviour himself (and surely his words may be allowed to decide) tells the Jews to search the scriptures, which testified of him, and in which they *thought they had eternal life.* What then is the inference? That the scriptures did teach them to expect a resurrection from the dead, but that without Him who was to be *the resurrection and the life*, the promise was not compleated, nor the expectation confirmed.

Supposing, however, we had no such incontrovertible evidence, and we could heap proof upon proof, might it not fairly be asked, what consolation Adam could have received from the promise in the garden of Eden, had it

not included the assurance of an atonement and a resurrection? He was to be restored to a happiness he had forfeited, to something that would soften and console him under the dreadful sentence of death passed upon him and his posterity, for disobedience to the divine commands. The expiation of his crime, therefore, not being yet made, the moment of death, without such expectation, must have annihilated every hope of pardon as far as he was personally concerned. With the rest of his posterity who never saw Christ, he might, and would be, (if we may be pardoned the expression) surprised into a resurrection, and which is a necessary consequence of making Christianity wholly retrospective with regard to former ages; but the assurance of a restoration to immortality, and which alone could take from *death its sting*, and from *the grave its victory*, must have appeared groundless at the approach of dissolution, without faith in a Redeemer's ransom from the power of sin and death. The covenant was the plan, and the blood of Christ the means, of human redemption, and thus called *the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant*. The time of the fulfilment of the promise being concealed might wisely be ordained to animate faith by constant expectation; the nature and end of that promise must have been revealed, or the types and figures of it could never have been adduced in proof of a Saviour's commission, much less been made matter of accusation against the unbelieving Jews, who discredited, or disowned, their meaning.

PAGE 5, LINE 22.

Should we, in the wildest digressions of heathen mythology, be able to measure back the wandering footsteps of idolatry, &c.

It is surely now in our power to trace them from the foot of the mountain, where the ark rested, through all the kingdoms of the earth; and the mysteries of oriental theology, brought forwards, with a profusion of documents, to illustrate and harmonize with the memorials of sacred and profane literature, exhibit such a body of proof in confirmation of the Mosaic records, and of one common origin of nations from the descendants of Noah, that, with the fullest allowance for the doubts and queries of sober investigation, conceding every thing to the refusal of evidence on any presumed or conjectural etymology, we defy the human mind, upon the principles of rational enquiry, to resist. Of these wonderful specimens of the greatest talents employed to the noblest purpose, the investigation of truth, we shall find ample occasion to speak hereafter.

PAGE 6, LINE 1.

To pick out from the tenets and precepts of Pagan philosophy authentic vouchers of the existing hope and promise of a Redeemer mighty to save, &c.

To every classical reader these testimonies will be so abundantly obvious, that his difficulty will not be about the number, but the choice. The idea mixes with all the

philosophy of Greece and Rome, and with its mythological clothing is the universal language of their poetry. Among the well-known and positive evidences of such an existing belief is the Platonic Dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades; wherein not only the necessity of a particular relation is set forth, but the expectation also of a particular person who was to come and teach it. Nay, when the question is asked, who the person is that will do it, even the present and superintending care of an Almighty Being is marked and defined:—"He is one "(says Socrates) who is now caring for you."—Οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ μελε περὶ σου. The same may be said of the famous Pollio of Virgil, wherein the poet, appearing to be copying almost the prophecy of Daniel—*He that was to come was to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity*—(Dan. ix. 24) thus addresses the expected offspring,

> "Te Duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri
> "Irrita, perpetuâ solvent formidine terras."

"Under thy conduct, whatever marks of our sin remain shall be blotted out, and free the earth from perpetual fear." To see this, with various other testimonies, placed in the strongest points of view, the reader has only to consult that invaluable work, "Letters on the Septuagint." In short, the original revelation of *the desire of all nations* is every where legible; and the subsisting traces of it, wherever they can be distinguished, confirm the universal tradition of the advent of the great Emanuel.

It would, however, be doing an injustice not only to this subject, but to the Christian cause in general, were I to pass by unnoticed the work of Mr. Whitaker on "The Origin of Arianism;"—a work so replete with erudition and deep research, and establishing upon such a solid foundation the antiquity of the faith in Christ Jesus, that (to express myself in his own language, and applying it, as I sincerely do, to this master-piece of critical enquiry) "whilst he is seeking for his Redeemer amidst the "clouds of heathenism, he never loses him again in the "gathering thickness of the atmosphere;" but through the pages of the historian, the poet, and the philosopher, has followed the evangelical Restorer of Man from age to age till He appears himself to preach the glad tidings of his salvation.

Supported by such opinions, I shall not be thought singular for totally differing from a writer of much eminence in the literary world; and who, in a late treatise* of elaborate discussion, endeavours to prove, that a Trinity of persons in the Divine nature was the *genuine* and *peculiar* doctrine of the primitive Christian church, that the Platonic writings never so much as glimpsed at the mysterious doctrine, and that the whole of Plato's philosophy may be resolved into his own sublime conceptions and abstract reasonings on the beauty and har-

* An Investigation of the Trinity of Plato, and of Philo Judeus, &c. by Cæsar Morgan, D.D. chaplain to the Bishop of Ely.

mony of the universe, and the order and proportion of its component parts.

I have no inclination to enter into a critical examination of the learned author's reasoning, but if Plato himself acknowledgeth, that he, together with the rest of the Grecians, received their choicest traditions and learning from *certain barbarians*, more ancient than themselves, but that they put them into a better mode, that is, dressed them up in the Grecian fashion to disguise them; if we know, that both he and his great masters in philosophy sought for instruction among these very barbarians, and were even ridiculed by them for the little they knew of what was most valuable in life, the perfection and nature of the Deity; then the question will be, what was this oriental theology? And this is so satisfactorily answered by the late and much-lamented Sir W. Jones, and the no less ingenious than laborious Mr. Maurice, that if they do not furnish cause to Dr. Morgan for altering his opinion, they will at least prevent those who read them from adopting it, and teach them rather to side with that of the good Clemens—Τι γαρ εστι Πλαταων η Μωσης Αττικιζων—What is Plato, but Moses conversing in the language of Athens. This may be paying too great a compliment to the Pagan theology, but it is a proof of the source from whence it was thought to spring. Furnished with materials of faith, which they knew not how to explain, the philosophers of Greece endeavoured to work them up into a systematic science; and wise in their own conceits, surrounded with

the fictitious lustre of allegory the traditional records of the Mosaic cosmogony, and the wisdom derived from Divine revelation. Some of the Platonizing fathers fell into the same errors, and wishing *to explain* what was only given them to *believe*, consulted philosophical learning, which they considered as a comment on and interpretation of the Trinity, only to bewilder themselves in the labyrinth of mode and essence. But a threefold distinction in the Deity, however distorted by interpretation, or disfigured by emblem, never lost its original stamp; and it is the faith of ancient times we contend for, not the explanation of the doctrines it inculcates. If the faith were not the same, how are we to interpret the 7th Article of our own church? We may safely, therefore, affirm with Plotinus, that the doctrine of a Trinity was παλαια δοξα. The Grecian philosophers receiving the doctrine, as it was corrupted, from Egypt or Chaldea, instead of amending it by their ingenuity, did but make it worse. And to sum up all in the words of one of the most able and zealous defenders of its faith the Christian world can boast:—"It is granted," says the late Mr. Jones, "that upon the rise and progress of idolatry, the *most ancient* heathens carried off *many sublime mysteries* of the true religion, and purloined *more* in after ages from the *people of* GOD. Yet when they *were in possession of them*, they mixed them up with their own atheistical principles, then strained away the purer part of the mixture, and let it run to waste; so

" that, if we now seek it again from them, there is little " to be found, but their own filthy sediments instead of " it. And if in scattered fragments, borrowed from the " Hebrews, there should be found *some* dark *notices* of " the true GOD, yet after all, we are not to form our senti- " ments from the heathen theology, but to reform and " correct that by the Christian."*

This appears to me to be a solution to every difficulty. It at once assimilates and separates the Pagan and Christian doctrines; it shews an intellectual Trinity debased into a physical one, and again restored to its purity by Him who came to claim and to shew his participation in the divine essence. For a full elucidation of this subject, we would refer the reader to " Letters on the Septuagint," " Origin of Arianism," " Discourses of Sir W. Jones," and the fifth volume of Mr. Maurice's " Indian Antiquities." And among these it would be unpardonable to omit one of the most satisfactory and comprehensive little tracts that ever was written, I mean an Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity, at the conclusion of Mr. Serle's truly Christian book, " Horæ Solitariæ."

PAGE 10, LINE 5.

Their unbelief drew down a penalty connected with their offence.

THERE will be few readers who will want to be reminded of the truly ingenious work of Mr. Bryant, upon

* Answer to an Essay on Spirit, by the Rev. W. Jones.

the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians; wherein he fully proves the peculiarity of those judgments, and shews how the honour of the true GOD was vindicated against their senseless deities; how their punishment corresponded with the offence, and was adapted to expose the idolatrous rites and insufficiency of the Gods in whom they trusted.

PAGE 12, LINE 4.

And from studies which might adorn, but should not be made the basis of, a Christian education, &c.

IT is with painful remark I here confess to allude to the system of public education; and reflecting, as I do, that after many years employed in classical attainments, in seeking knowledge in the Lyceum, the Portico, and the Academy, I had not advanced a step in the only knowledge that was to make me wiser, happier, or better; I most cordially join my voice to that of my friend and school-fellow, Dr. Rennell, as well as to that of another champion in the Christian cause, who followed us in the same mistaken paths of science, and with whose sentiments I am proud to concur, in deprecating that inattention to serious concerns which is so visible in our greatest and best-endowed seminaries. I scruple not to affirm, that our senate and our bar are now exhibiting, in many instances, the fatal consequences of this neglect; and

that amidst the exertion of the noblest faculties, the display of the brightest talents, religion has too often to weep over a total indifference to her duties, an habitual disregard for the providence of GOD, the gospel of his Son, and the sacred institutions of his service.*

PAGE 18, LINE 7.

It is only from such testimony that we can account for the wild waste of human happiness.

IT must be obvious, that I here allude to the Memoirs of the Abbé Baruel, the most extraordinary as well as useful publication, in point of matter, and in point of time, that, in my opinion, ever issued from the press. That there may be objections made to parts of it by the Protestant reader, I am ready to allow; and if there were not, the author must, to a certain degree, have abandoned the dogmas of his own persuasion. In claiming his testimony, I claim it as the most clear and substantial evidence of a blasphemous and systematic conspiracy against the GOD of our salvation; of an attempt to banish from the heart of man all remembrance of a Redeemer's love, and to lead him forth, devoid of hope, to the sanguinary

* Vide note to Dr. Rennell's admirable sermon before the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; and the preface to Mr. Gisborne's last publication, though not least in fame, "A Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion."

triumphs of anarchy and rebellion. I consider the horrid detail as a salutary warning to every Christian country, to guard against that infidel spirit which is every where working its deadly work; and exhibiting, in its fatal consequences, the danger of relaxing the spring that gives the movement to all human happiness. Let it be remembered, that infidelity is nursed upon the lap of indifference; and a carelessness about opinions has left in liberal estimation among us, Christian drunkards, Christian gamesters, and Christian adulterers; and, with a solecism in language, as well as in religion, Christian deists. We know of no tie to bind such friends to our social interest, but personal gratification; and infidelity has only to treat them with more indulgence, and they will readily join her standard, and soon become associates in her crimes.

Should the reader be inclined to doubt the horrid detail, let him peruse the work of Professor Robinson, who, without any communication with, or knowledge of, the Abbé Baruel, with a marvellous coincidence of observation, seems to have abridged the substance of the work.

PAGE 19, LINE 9.

But the alarming popularity of writings, &c.

The Oracles, and the Age of Reason, seem exactly suited to each other; and knaves and infidels have only to throw off the sober habits of religion, and renounce their Redeemer, to establish their proficiency in the science of

truth and morals. The melancholy result of all our illumination at the close of the eighteenth century is, that the bold and blasphemous assertions of Thomas Paine have superseded the authority of the holy scriptures, and the deistical jargon of Mr. Godwin has changed the moral and religious principles of many a weak and conceited youth into wild and groundless speculation. It has been whispered to us, that this gentleman's *philosophism*, with all its attendant and licentious apparatus of novels and plays, forms a considerable part of academic studies. If the report be true, we shall soon taste the bitter waters flowing from such a source.

Of the quantity and quality of improvement to be gained in the school of Mr. Godwin, a judgment may be formed from the specimens already afforded by some of his professed disciples; for impiety, blasphemy, and impurity, are not only publicly proclaimed from the press, but become a traffic of profit, in a country of religious hope and dependence.

To those faithful guardians of our morals, who *have weighed Mr. Godwin* in *the balance*, and *recorded his value*, the public are much indebted; would I could say as much of others, who, assuming the title, and as professed arbiters of literary merit, *Nullius addicti* (as they tell us) *jurare in verba magistri*, are giving circulation, under the veil of candour and liberality, to works of the most profligate and pernicious tendency; and are only withdrawn from the ranks to act as pioneers to the hos

of infidels, who are preparing their assault against the fortress of Christianity.

In a sermon lately published, and which will deservedly rank among the highest of our literary productions, Mr. Hall thus speaks of them:—"Animated by numbers, and "emboldened by success, the infidels of the present day "have given a new direction to their efforts, and im- "pressed a new character on the ever-growing mass of "their impious speculations.

"By uniting more closely with each other, by giving a "sprinkling of irreligion to all their literary productions, "they aim to engross the formation of the public mind; "and, amidst the warmest professions of attachment to "virtue, to effect an entire disruption of morality from "religion. Pretending to be the teachers of virtue, and "the guides of life, they propose to revolutionize the "morals of mankind, to regenerate the world by a process "entirely new, and to rear the temple of virtue not merely "without the aid of religion, but on the renunciation of "its principles, and the derision of its sanctions. Their "party has derived a great accession of numbers and "strength from events the most momentous and asto- "nishing in the political world, which have divided the "sentiments of Europe betwixt hope and terror, and "however they may issue, have, for the present, swelled "the ranks of infidelity. So rapidly, indeed, has it ad- "vanced since this crisis, that a great majority on the "Continent, and in England a considerable proportion,

"of those who pursue literature as a profession, may "justly be considered as the open or disguised abettors "of atheism."*

Leaving these gentlemen, and the effects of their writings, to the correction of this able writer, I would only suggest to them, and to every corruptor of the public morals, one serious consideration, and which, unless all sense of a judgment to come be extinguished, will at some time or other have its due weight and terror.—That as there scarcely can be named a vice which terminates in itself, or with the actor, so the corruption of the human mind has by far the most fatal, as well as the most extensive, consequences; and when the writers sleep in their graves, the infidel essay, the immodest poem, or the lascivious novel, may be increasing the sum of their guilt, by increasing the number of accusing criminals, who at the bar of judgment will plead trumpet-tongued against the authors of their ruin. To collect his works, wherever he could find them, and at any price, with the view of consigning them to oblivion, was, I believe, among the last acts of a repentant Rochester.

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* Vide Sermon by Robert Hall, A.M. on Modern Infidelity, considered with respect to its influence on society.

PAGE 21, LINE 2.

I advert to that fatal curiosity, which, with the genius of a neighbouring country, has imported a wildness of imagination that despises sober restraint, &c.

I cannot be mistaken here as meaning to specify Germany, and to lament that sad and vitiated taste, which, through the medium of her literature, is now creeping into all the favourite productions of the day. Hitherto the disgrace has been pretty much confined to theatrical representations; and if we must have them, disgraceful enough it is to see our Shakespear abandoned, and the habits, the principles, and the religion of a Christian people yielding themselves up to a momentary delirium of the senses, and submitting to every insulting outrage in the dramatic mockery of feeling. I trust I am speaking with no prophetic warning; but from a long residence in that country, being pretty conversant with the writings of most of its admired authors, I venture to pronounce, that from the opening of these stores, as from the opening of Pandora's box, every desolating mischief will fly forth among us. With some, and some noble exceptions, I am ready to allow, from the productions of the German Plato Mendelsohn, to those of the epicurean novelist Wieland, and so downwards to the coarse, though shrewd, buffoonery of Nicolai, all is an attack upon Revelation. And let it be remembered, that the pen of genius,

which has been a poignard to stab the morals of mankind, has also, in the course of retributive justice, furnished to avarice and ambition the means of gratification, and placed a real poignard in the hands of the oppressor and assassin. From the sceptical metaphysics of Professor Kant, from such writings as those of Messrs. Fichte, Knigge, Bahrt, and Weishaupt, (we could name many others, if it were prudent, of even a more dangerous tendency, and some also proceeding from theological chairs) what other consequences could be expected? And with what dreadful proofs does the caution of our Saviour now experimentally address us—*by their fruits ye shall know them.*

PAGE 34, LINE 2.

Before Abraham was, I am.

THIS argument is weilded by Mr. Whitaker* with his usual ability, and I have ever considered it as one of the most positive and incontrovertible proofs of our blessed Lord's divinity that can be found in the holy writings; because it is one, that under no accommodation of meaning, either in the original or translation, can be bent from its plain and literal signification—Πριν Αβραμ γενεσθαι, Εγω ειμι—*Before Abraham was, I am.* With a bold paraphrase, Socinus would have expunged its meaning, by construing it, "Before Abraham *can be,* Abraham, that is, the father of many nations, I am; I must be the Saviour and the light of the world." But this being too vio-

* Origin of Arianism, p. 261, &c.

lent an exertion of critical power, succeeding objectors to our faith have rested in another interpretation of the passage, but equally adverse to its fair and literal construction. They argue, that Christ does not mean to say, he was before Abraham, *in point of time*, but that as Messiah he was *before him in dignity and importance*. This may possibly pass, though not without some difficulty, upon an English reader, because, in our language, one thing may be said to be *before* another, if it excel it; but the Greek words will bear no such meaning—πριν invariably relates to priority of time, and εγω ειμι, standing as they do in the *present*, with that which *was past*, can be spoken with propriety only in *one case*, to which the whole world does not afford a second.*

PAGE 40, LINE 13.

Will he allow their scriptures to bear witness of Jesus, and the redemption of mankind through him, and doubt their veracity, when they prove the necessity of this rich display of mercy, by being witness also of the fall of man, and the state from which he fell?

I must here beg leave to notice some theological opinions, which, though never weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, pass current in the world under the stamp of

* Not to repeat my own words, vide these objections answered in "Scriptural Revision of Socinian Arguments," p. 113, &c.

Christianity, and are thus received and circulated by many, who are either unable to examine and appreciate their due value, or are deceived by their resemblance to the Christian image and superscription. My allusion is intended more particularly to point at a work of abundant research and ingenuity, and which, sent into the world with all the merit that attaches to the correct and amiable manners of its author, only serves to lead the judgement more astray, and to spread the delusion wider.

"With an unfeigned sincerity," says Mr. Sullivan, in his View of Nature, "I am proud to declare it, I "honour and reverence the sacred scriptures; but I am "not in consequence bound to honour and reverence all "the *rust* and *refuse* which they may have collected in "their long and perilous voyage, and during the disas- "ters of their captivity. Neither am I to suppose, from "the Hebrew phraseology, that GOD talked with Abra- "ham and others mouth to mouth, and with an audible "voice, as one man would with another, or that men were "almost as familiar with Angels as with their fellow- "men. These are things not to be believed, for they are "contrary to *nature* and *reason*, and to all the general "laws and harmony of the world; but *figuratively* and "*allegorically*, I must allow, they are to bear an inter- "pretation, especially when we know there are passages "which give the most sublime ideas of the majesty of "the Supreme Being, the glory of his works, and the "incomprehensible methods of his Providence."

Thus, instead of searching for the *truth in figure*, Mr. Sullivan, for the better interpretation of the scriptures, would read them *backwards*, (for I know no better expression for it) and search for *figure in truth*. How far this mode of reasoning has caused him to deviate from the true sense of them, he soon allows us to determine; for speaking of the fall of man, a few pages afterwards, he tells us, " that *it has ever been the received doctrine*, " that this guilt has been transferred to the whole of " Adam's posterity, and that on his account alone we " are obnoxious to the Divine wrath. But whoever could " consider guilt otherwise than as a personal thing, or " any more to be transferred than one man's being can " be transferred to another?" After pursuing the subject farther, " How are we to conceive," says he, " that " GOD Almighty himself should be *so unmerciful*, as to " call *us to an account* for the *crime of an old forefather*, " *committed nearly six thousand years ago?* I would " not willingly offend in speaking of original sin; but I " can no more be persuaded that sin can descend in the " blood, than I can that a man's knowledge and abilities " can run in the veins; for I believe a man may be as " easily born a ready-made philosopher or divine, as he " can be born a ready-made profligate or sinner. But " supposing there was such traductive guilt, the child, " surely, could no more deserve punishment for it than " he could for inheriting his father's distempers; which, " in charity, one would suppose would deserve pity rather

" than punishment. Nay, it would seem altogether in-
" consistent with Divine justice and mercy, because the
" guilt must have been infused into the soul by GOD,
" when he originally made it, which would argue a double
" degree of pravity; first, to implant sin in man, and
" then to punish him for it. How tremendous! to ima-
" gine GOD inflicting conscious misery, and that eternally,
" on millions and millions for a single sin committed be-
" fore they were brought into existence. How frightful
" to suppose, that he takes the sweet infant by death from
" the affectionate mother's breast, almost as soon as it
" becomes capable of casting its innocent smiles in her
" face, and the still more advanced little prattler from the
" father's knee, and cast them both into hell, to suffer
" conscious misery without end, for they know not what."

Far be it from me to mean the smallest disrespect to Mr. Sullivan, but really this *language of the nursery*, this *lullaby sort of reasoning*, puts at defiance all serious refutation. It first creates a frightful image, and then tells those, whom it might fill with apprehension, not to be afraid. If *Christ died for all;* if *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;* and if, moreover, our Saviour himself took little children and blessed them, and even declared, (with an emblem borrowed from their simplicity) that *of such was the kingdom of heaven;* there is surely more consolation to be derived from these words than from any arguments Mr. Sullivan could supply. But from what page of the holy scriptures does

he draw his terrific imagery? They plainly tell us, that man fell from his primitive state, and that through Christ he was to be restored; that he had become subject to sin and death, and from that bondage he was to be released. Granting, therefore, the child could not personally sin, he must personally die, and the resurrection unto eternal life was to be the *free gift of* GOD *through Jesus Christ*.

In the personal offences, which Mr. S. justly applies to every individual, the child could not be implicated; but these were the *consequences* of a corrupted nature, of which he equally partook, and which was only to be purified through Him who was to redeem, to regenerate, and to restore.

We beseech Mr. Sullivan, therefore, to consider, that with *this rust and refuse* he is sweeping away all the doctrines of Christianity. That the whole of them depend upon man's lost and helpless condition, and look to his recovery and pardon. But upon his own assumption, also, and according to his own measure of faith, what defence of revelation (and he professes to undertake it) has he left? He may, and indeed does, stand up as an advocate for the necessity and dignity of religion; but then he is only an advocate for his own religious system, and which the doubts and cavils of others may claim a right to cleanse of many of its corruptions, till at last the book, which the pilgrim, just escaped from atheism, saw with joy in the hands of rational Christianity, because apparently so like his own, shall appear with half its leaves

cut out as *useless*, and with so many words erased in the others, as to render the *residue no longer intelligible*.* The whole of scripture is true, or none. And the temporising soldier, who concedes any part of the Christian territory, only gives a footing to infidelity, which will soon rob him of the rest.†

PAGE 41, LINE 9.

We should have found the inspired author of the Pentateuch to be the most *faithful historian*, the *wisest of legislators*, and the *soundest philosopher*.

We have been so accustomed to read the history of nations in the recorded annals of Greece and Rome; we are taught to humble ourselves with such devotion before this intellectual period of the world, and to gather from their exhaustless stores all our hoards of literature and science; that we scarcely deign to cast a look upon remoter ages, or to busy ourselves with any enquiry farther than the progress of their civilization, and the boundaries of their conquests lead us.

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* Lest the reader should be at a loss to comprehend this allusion, we refer him with pleasure to a most beautiful and interesting publication, which has just appeared under the title of the "New Pilgrim's Progress." In pages 48, 49, &c. the objections to and doubts about scripture are treated with the most amusing irony.

† Vide Sullivan's "View of Nature," vol. v. letter 82.

But though we may dwell with pleasure, and with profit, on these historical details; though the pages of Herodotus and Livy, of Thucydides and Tacitus, may furnish interesting memorials of a people whose fame then filled the world; yet be it remembered, that they present us with nothing but profane errors and human passions; that they have no other foundation but a human, and consequently a fallible, authority; and however profound in their researches, or solid in their reasonings, that they are standing only on a little spot of the universe, and bidding us admire its temporary fertility and cultivation.

Not so the faithful Historian of GOD; plain and simple in his narrative, he embraces in it the whole system of the universe, he gives us the origin and progress of a kingdom that never was to be destroyed, but which was to support itself through all the changes and vicissitudes of states and empires. Without staying to remark on the events, or entering into any reasonings or discussions on the facts he relates, he carries us through a period of upwards of two thousand years, every where creating an interest proportioned to the glorious work he had to reveal, and every where exhibiting proofs of such revelation by miraculous interpositions of Providence, that signalized and confirmed his authority, and by a prophetic spirit that divinity only could bestow. "To him we owe the "knowledge of the beginning of the world, the forming "and the fall of man, the promise of the Messiah, the "deluge, the renewed propagation of mankind: the in-

" ventors* of arts, the original of nations, the founders " of kingdoms and empires, the institution of laws, the " fountain of religious rites, yea, of all the ancient my- " thology, and, which is most considerable, the means of " propagating that sense of GOD and of religion which " mankind brought into the world with them, and how " it came to be corrupted."

Well then may that historian be called faithful, who, supplying a light where otherwise all the world had been in darkness, gives an explanation to allegory, a consistency to fiction, an epoch to every kingdom, and a genealogy to the whole earth. Whose testimony now remaining, detects the errors of chronology, repairs the ruins of time, and amidst the wanderings of man, the variety of his language, the corruptions of his belief, the obscurity of his origin, and the uncertainty of his destination, supplies a clue to lead him back to the source of his errors, and to the very place at which he abandoned the path of truth, and the guidance of his Almighty Creator.

We are not without abundance of evidence to corroborate these assertions; and how the customs, manners, laws, and religious ceremonies of every people may be traced to the Mosaic history and institutions, has employed the pens, and encouraged the investigation, of many great and learned men.†

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* Preface to Bishop Patrick's Commentary.

† I would specifically mention Eusebii Præparatio Evangelica passim; Huetii Demonstratio Evangelica, propositio iv. from the 4th to the 12th chapter; Bocharti Geographia.

But to the wonder of our age, and to the honour of our country, may it now be said, that

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in Historiâ,

has been brought before the tribunal of truth, stripped of every meretricious ornament, and her Pagan frippery been exposed to the view of her deluded admirers. It has been the distinguishing glory of a Bryant (and I now quote the words of one who *once* knew how to feel, and no one better to express his feelings, for the dignity of literature) to pave the way to a more liberal and expanded instruction in our public seminaries for letters and languages; to have opened the springs of the ancient anti-christ, to have displayed his two great and capital horns, his two fountain heads—*Pomp and Will Worship*, in the idolatrous veneration of fire and water, of the elements in their fallen and divided state; to have annihilated fable, and expunged it wholly from the early periods and epochs of the Grecian story, fixing the gates of that story there in a manner, where the great Greek historian has fixed them himself. His oracular mysteries, his deluge memorials, his arkite processions, rites and services; his ogdoad, his ages, his Egyptian dynasties; his line drawn accurately, and insurmountably, between the first general migration and settlement of the nations, and the dispersion and confusion which took place afterwards, in a single, separate, revolted, and rebellious tribe; in consequence

thereof, his Cuthite colonies, his wonderful investigation of their travels and voyages; his most ingenious evolution and explication of the wanderings of Io in a chorus of Eschylus, by him prosecuted in the flights and expeditions of families; his unravelling the wide web of mythological fiction, and unfolding it even to the bare slender threads of simple antiquity; his innumerable illustrations of the most admired Greek authors, making them to become, what they never yet were, intelligible to themselves and to us;—these, and infinite other, his learned discoveries, in exact conformity with scripture, and in harmony at the time with the best sense and reason, without sophistication and without refinement, and strengthened, supported, and enriched in all parts with such pregnancy of proof, with so luxuriant a testimony; these, I say, in their aggregate and full comprehension, are so new, so strange, so vast, so instructive, that, for my part, I cannot but think there was a providence of GOD superintending his labours, and a light from GOD thrown on his meditations.*—To a testimony so full and explicit I should have only to add my unfeigned admiration and gratitude, for the many hours of delight and improvement passed over Mr. Bryant's instructive pages; but I would silence every captious objection to his stu-

* Preface to an Essay on the Revelations, by the Rev. William Cooke, formerly fellow of King's College, and Greek Professor in he University of Cambridge.

pendous work, by the comment of another writer, no less celebrated than himself in the annals of science, and whose memory will be for ever cherished, like his, by all the friends of Christianity. With a no less inquisitive than candid mind, Sir William Jones stands upon the very ground that Mr. Bryant had discovered; and from the various forms of Indian idolatry, from the deities, rites, and tenets of the earliest settlers upon the earth, he brings the recital of facts to corroborate, in many instances, the deductions of etymology. He supports the fabric of Christianity upon the same pillars which Mr. Bryant had reared; he investigates the corruptions of original revelation; traces them through all their impure streams from the fountain head; has brought the antiquity of those very writings, which modern infidelity had opposed to the Mosaic history, to corroborate and substantiate all its assertions; has reduced their incomprehensible chronology to the scriptural periods of time, and confined their extended geography within the compass of the eastern hemisphere. In a word, he has enlightened our path through the mazes of the Pagan mythology, and shortened our way to those proofs which, however they might be deduced or illustrated from the fabulous records of Greece, might either be disputed from the scantiness of materials or the obscurity of the documents. If, therefore, we may think with the admirer of Mr. Bryant, whom we have just quoted, that there was a providence of GOD superintending his labours, surely we must also believe, that it

continued to be a guide in these researches; and when, after a course of the most laborious and minute investigation, we find it asserted by such a man, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis *are true*, or the whole fabric of our national religion *is false*, upon what ground will infidelity hold an argument? since what it might reject as matter *of faith*, is now submitted to *rational* determination; and they have no longer the easy task of ridiculing the revelations of Moses, but the difficult one of setting aside the discoveries of Sir William Jones.*

* It is almost needless to refer the reader to the Analysis of Ancient Mythology, by Mr. Bryant, and to the Asiatic Researches, under the direction of Sir W. Jones. In the latter, I would particularly recommend to his perusal the Dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India; and the President's third Annual Discourse on the Hindus, vol. i. octavo edition, p. 221 and 415. The three discourses of the President, vol. ii. on the Arabs, the Tartars, and the Persians; on the Descent of the Afghans from the Jews, p. 67; on the Indian Zodiac, p. 289; on the Astronomy of the Hindus, p. 225. In vol. iii. the 8th and 9th Discourses of the President, more especially the latter, on the Origin and Families of Nations, p. 479; on the Indian Cycle of sixty years, p. 209; and the Lunar Year of the Hindus, p. 257. In vol. iv. (though we can no longer quote the records of the Society as under the inspection of their late illustrious head, yet we can quote them as animated by the same soul and spirit of enquiry) the Discourse on the Philosophy of the Asiatics, p. 165; Dissertation on Semiramis, p. 376; Account of the Cave in the Island of Elephanta—contain much curious matter. In the 5th volume (we think the preface to it, in form of advertisement, had better been omitted, as suggesting doubts without leading to any direct conclusion) the Dissertations on the Chronology of the Hindus, p. 241; on the Names of the Cabirian Deities, &c. p. 297; and on the religious

Though I have dwelt so long upon this subject, I should feel unpardonable in passing by the Indian Antiquities of Mr. Maurice, a compilation that entitles him to the thanks of the Christian world, and which ought to be even more abundant for his late History of Hindoostan —a work that carries with it its own reward, as defending, and nobly defending, that cause which, under every worldly disappointment, will bring peace and consolation to its supporters. I have not the pleasure of knowing him, but he will have the goodness to accept this acknowledgment of my obligations to him, and my warmest wishes for his welfare. No language, no assertion, no documents, could establish stronger proofs of the corruption of the grand primœval tradition, than the two extraordinary prints of Creeshna, which Mr. Maurice has given in the last part of his history; and once more we will speak of this work, as replete with the most useful and interesting information.*

We now come to consider Moses as *a philosopher*, and *as a philosopher taught of* GOD. Rolling on with its

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ceremonies of the Hindus, and of the Brahmins especially—are extremely interesting and curious. In short, with their little shades of difference, we consider the picture of nations, exhibited by these two great and learned men, as preserving those uniform features of religion which the Almighty stamped upon his work, and in which the deformity of idolatry only serves to set forth the beauties of the original.

* Vide Ancient History of Hindoostan, by the Rev. T. Maurice.

train of uniform effects, his system of the world still continues to diffuse life, and health, and comfort to man; who, instead of looking to the book* of GOD's word, has been employed in hunting for truth and science in the operations of nature, and at last brought back nothing but error, conceit, and ignorance. The fabulous theories of the universe, which have thus been raised, and for a time believed, with all the rubbish that filled the schools, and disgraced the name of philosophy, have long since been consigned to oblivion by the sagacious discoveries of Sir I. Newton. Of this great man I speak with the utmost veneration; I speak of him as of one who has produced a work which will always stand first in its kind, which the capacity of man ever did, or ever will produce; as of one, who, in a material point of view, might say with more justice than his ancient predecessor—Δος πε σλω και την γην κινησω.

But when *he* carries me beyond the limits of this visible world; when his gigantic powers of genius projects the planets into boundless space, and then impels and

* It may be worthy of remark, and certainly comes in indirect proof of the inspiration of Moses, that although *learned*, as he is represented to be, *in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, who were familiar with the motions of the heavenly bodies, and well versed in the calculations of astronomy, he makes no scientific remark, which he naturally would have done, *had he invented* the history of the creation, but simply relates, that GOD made the light, that he divided it from the darkness, that he made the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night.

arrests their course; when, from their periodical revolutions, he not only measures, estimates, and computes the different distances, magnitudes, and motions of the heavenly bodies, but prescribes to them their motive force, and sustains them in their orbits; when, having freed them from every obstruction to their rotatory impulse, he approaches their central sun, and from thence darting forth a light to illuminate their hemisphere, he calculates the velocity of its luminous rays; I must confess I pause, whilst I wonder—I am not reading the book of revelation, and for that alone have I an implicit faith. It becomes a question, whether in some cases his calculations be not imaginary; whether he be not a computer of proportions which do not exist, and of forces, of which the positive existence, as well as agency, remains to be proved. I feel myself as unwilling, as I am unable, to set myself in opposition to opinions so long cherished and so ably supported; but the basis of many of them is surely hypothetical, and the only truth that I lay up in my mind as such, is a truth that *can never be shaken*. I know with what bitterness every occasional opposition to any part of the Newtonian Philosophy has been treated, and it might be safer and more prudent, as far as this world is concerned, to treat Moses with contempt, than to entertain the smallest doubt about the exemplified phænomena of Sir I. Newton. In the former case, one might be thought singular—in the latter, one must be ignorant. But till they are reconciled, till scripture and

nature be made to agree, the error must be in the demonstration of the cause, since the effect remains invariably the same. If the discoveries of Sir I. Newton had remained unknown, the planetary system would have moved on in its appointed course, and without our knowledge of attraction or gravitation, would equally have fulfilled all the purposes of its destination. Besides, also, time makes great discoveries; though to the end of it, man will be left in ignorance of many things. Had Sir I. Newton lived to witness the surprising properties of electricity—had he seen a powerful agent, acting according to *no known laws* of gravity, projection, or attraction, and yet solving several phænomena in the universe; and even from *actual experiment* producing in a spherical body a *revolutionary* and a *rotatory* motion—he might have combined other powers with those of attraction and gravitation, to account for the origin and perpetuity of motion. Had he weighed in his capacious mind the plain and direct assertion of Moses—GOD *said, Let there be light, and there was light*—he would not have thrown into the hands of infidelity so powerful an argument against the truth of GOD's work; and which, upon the supposition of all light emanating from the sun, has been industriously made use of to falsify the whole history of creation. Also, since it is now incontestibly proved, that we live in an ocean of elementary fire; that in all free spaces, and within the pores of all bodies, whether solid or fluid, there exists a subtle æther, which, while at rest in equilibrio, seems to

be doing nothing, but is at the same time silently at work in all nature; that till it is thrown out of its balance it does not shew itself, and even then we know it not in its total force, but only in its accidental differences. And if, moreover, this *subtle and elastic substance,* (which, in the most attenuated and unresisting state, Sir I. Newton himself admits *readily to pervade all bodies, and to be expanded through the whole heavens*) when acting by electricity, *blow, burn,* and *shine;* may it not be presumed without inconsistency, and upon the fairest deductions of analogy, to be the old light which filled creation, before the sun was placed in the firmament, to put it into motion, and thus to warm and illumine the earth with his beams?* Might we not assume a doubt, as to the cal-

* Vide a most ingenious dissertation on this elementary fluid, by Mr. King, "Morsels of Criticism," p. 48, et seq. But I hope, also, I may refer the reader to some Letters on Electricity by the late and much-lamented Mr. Jones, which have been kindly communicated to me in MS. and are designed, I believe I may say, for the press.—Vide also, the Bishop of Landaff's Chemical Essays, vol. i. essay 4. Also, Nature Displayed, vol. iii.—The German philosopher, though his inference be not just, wholly denies emanation. "Having esta-"blished," says Euler, "a perfect vacuum between the heavenly "bodies, there remains no other to be adopted, but that of emana-"tion; which obliged Newton to maintain, that the sun, and all "other luminary bodies, emit rays, which are always particles, in-"finitely small, of their mass darted from them with incredible "force. It must be such to a very high degree, in order to impress "on rays of light that inconceivable velocity with which they come "from the sun to us in the space of eight minutes. But let us see

culated velocity with which light, as supplied by the sun and reflected from the other planets, must necessarily travel, by affording another solution, and by filling up the vacuum, or at least the unresisting medium, with a continued and violent elementary agitation?

In proposing these doubts, I propose them, I hope, with all the humility that becomes me, and with a full assurance, that if the œconomy of nature were not made visible to Sir Isaac Newton, it is because its Divine architect has hidden it from mortal eyes.

The errors of such a man, should any be imputed to him, ought to confine us to effects; they are produced for our blessings, though the manner of the production may remain unknown. Even supposing Sir I. Newton's demonstrations to be conclusive, they determine nothing, because they only prove the *sufficiency*, not the *reality*, of the causes assigned. They shew, that they possibly

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" whether this theory be consistent with Newton's leading doctrines, " which require an absolute vacuum in the heavens, that the planets " may encounter no manner of resistance to their motions. You " must conclude, on a moment's reflection, that the space in which " the heavenly bodies revolve, instead of remaining a vacuum, must " be filled with the rays, not only of the sun, but likewise of all the " other stars, which are continually passing through it from every " quarter, and in all directions, with incredible rapidity. The hea- " venly bodies which traverse those spaces, instead of encountering " a vacuum, will meet with the matter of luminary rays in a terrible " agitation, which must disturb these bodies in their motions much " more than if it were in a state of rest."—Euler's Eighteenth Letter to a German Princess, translated by Dr. Hunter.

may be the true moving powers, not that they actually are so; and have, moreover, this defect, that they account only for the progressive motion of the planets round the sun, but leave us quite in the dark as to what causes their rotatory motion round their own axes; nor do they explain the reason of their respective positions, or declinations to the ecliptic.

After all, our wisdom is to be wise in the things which our Creator has revealed to us; and no observation can be more beautiful, or more just, than that philosophy searches after his instruments, theology asserts his power, but human wisdom will never be able to settle the mode of its influence.*

In thus declaring my own opinions, I should suppress a very powerful evidence against many of them, were I not to state the objections of a most candid and learned friend, to whom this publication is indebted for many judicious remarks, and with whom, I am sure, I only differ but to agree. He certainly adopts the surest mode of defence, by assimilating the philosophy of Newton to the language of revelation, and making it obey the direction, whilst it unfolds the power, of the Creator.—To the foregoing note, his answer was as follows:—

" I fairly confess, that I cannot see the use of sowing " dissentions between Moses and Newton. That light, " and its division from darkness, forming as now the day

* Physiological Disquisitions, by the Rev. William Jones.

" and night, was the work of the first evening and morn-
" ing of the creation, I am certain; and consequently,
" that light, and the seasons of the day, preceded the
" creation of the sun, and moon, and stars, which were
" the fourth day's work, I have not the smallest doubt.

" But how will this precedency tend to establish the
" substitution of electricity for a radiance now emanating
" from the sun? Let it be held in mind, I beseech you,
" that not only light was created, but its division from
" darkness was appointed also, and that evening and
" morning proceeded in their due succession. Of elec-
" tricity, then, we must suppose, that there was created
" only so much as served to illumine one hemisphere;
" and that to this the rotatory motion of the earth pre-
" sented each part in its turn, while the opposite was
" withdrawn into the darkness that was divided from it.
" But we do not find that electricity is now less capable
" of excitation in the darkest night than in the brightest
" day; nor that it exists in a less proportion in the dark-
" ened hemisphere, than in that from which we now
" derive our light. To say that it was created, universally
" infused into our globe, and yet only excited on one
" side of nature, seems a most violent mode of escape,
" and one to which I can hardly conceive the most deter-
" mined advocate of electricity to resort.

" This, thrice repeated, succession of evening and
" morning, equally obviates Mr. Kirwan's hypothesis.
" Though I accede to his opinion, that original christali-

" zation, and the chemical decompositions and recom-
" positions which must have taken place, in consequence
" of a diminution of that enormous menstruum which
" originally covered the whole earth, concurred in the
" production of heat, and immense volcanic irruptions,
" yet I cannot ascribe to them that light which consti-
" tuted the day; it was on the surface, and of course
" went round with it, carrying, consequently, a conti-
" nuance of light which has thus no means of being di-
" vided from darkness.

" That the light, or luminous fountain, which the Al-
" mighty called into existence, had, previous to its being
" confined to a permanent residence, a local and a cir-
" cumscribed situation, cannot be reasonably doubted;
" but that this should be in contact with the earth, or
" even in its neighbourhood, is by no means equally to
" be presumed. It is enough for terrestrial purposes, if
" it shed such a radiance as could enlighten our surface;
" and as the sun now occupies no greater space than
" serves to supply a vicissitude of day and night, why are
" we, without authority, to suppose a diffusion of the
" luminous matter that would not answer that end? That
" that end was answered, however, we are assured, and
" therefore we must admit the adequacy of the means.

" The rotary motion of the earth, before the division of
" the waters which covered it, is evinced by the brevity
" of its axis, when compared with a diameter of its æqua-
" torial circumference.

" That light, which on its first creation was indepen-
" dent of every other body, should afterwards, on the
" creation of a fit recipient, be confined to its new resi-
" dence, is a supposition consistent with that Revelation,
" which, having ushered it into being, gives us after-
" wards the sun to rule the day, assigns to him (with the
" other luminaries) the very office which his Creator
" had before conferred on abstract light, and places him
" *in the firmament, to divide the light from the dark-*
" *ness, the day from the night, and to give light upon*
" *the earth.*

" Considering the sun, therefore, as the appointed re-
" sidence of light, adapted at once to receive, to retain,
" and in due proportion to shed it forth, I am utterly
" unable to discover, that any argument against the truth
" of GOD's word has been thrown by Newton into the
" hands of infidelity; nor can I conceive a more accurate
" coincidence than subsists between the Mosaic declara-
" tion, that the sun was created *to give light upon the*
" *earth,* and the Newtonian supposition ' of all light
' emanating from the sun.'

" Newton, discussing the nature of light, and its pre-
" sent perceptible source, could have no possible induce-
" ment to investigate its revolutions, or examine into its
" mode of existence and operations, antecedent to its
" having entered into its solar habitation; he knew he
" had not premises, and Newton was not apt to talk
" without them. No human eye had ever seen light in

" its original state; it had been deposited in the sun be-
" fore the creation of Adam.

" The emanation of *all* light from the sun may pos-
" sibly exceed the literal truth, but not the truth in view.
" The stars, which may, or may not be, the tenements of
" light themselves, had not the smallest claim to consi-
" deration. The radiance of the sun was his subject,
" the refrangibility, &c. of that light which proceeds from
" him alone was within his contemplation.

" Were that ocean of elementary fire, that subtle æther
" in which we live, and which pervades all nature, affirm-
" ed to be ' the old light which filled creation, before
' the sun and the moon were placed in the heavens to
' put it into motion,' " here, indeed, I should find a dif-
" ference between revelation and philosophy; in the
" former, the sun *gives* light; in the latter, he only works
" an electric machine. According to Moses, therefore,
" light is a proceeding body; and consequently capable
" of whatever velocity it may be proved to possess."

PAGE 41, LINE 12.

Nay, we venture to affirm, on the most satisfactory proofs, that in proportion as discovery has taken place of conjecture, and experiment filled up the void of theory, the grand and awful scene of creation, as exhibited to our view in the first chapter of Genesis, accords with the known principles of material agency, and disposes of the elements in a manner consistent with their visible and immediate properties.

WITHOUT referring to chemical analysis, or to the various discoveries which have been made of the composition and decomposition of bodies, we consider Mr. Kirwan, in his late Geological Essays, (abstracted from all theological considerations, and upon philosophic ground alone) to have placed these assertions, if not out of dispute, at least beyond the reach of contradiction.

PAGE 43, LINE 23.

The nearer we keep to Adam, this promise of a second Adam, perfect and sinless, to stand before GOD, appears to be the constant object of hope, and the subject of meditation.

Dr. Alix, in his "Judgment of the Jewish Church," brings proof, that in the opinion of the true Jewish doc-

tors, the prophecy of Genesis, chap. iii. 15, was understood by Adam and Eve of the Saviour of the world; and that Eve, in prospect of this, being delivered of her first son, called him Cain, saying, *I have gotten a man*, or this man, *from the Lord*, believing that he was the promised Messiah. That being deceived in this expectation, as also in her hopes from Abel, she asked another son of GOD, who gave her Seth. They maintain, also, that the name of Enos was given to Seth's son upon the same account, because they thought him that excellent man whom GOD had promised.*

PAGE 45, LINE 5.

There must have been some ordained form of worship.

IT should be recollected, that animal food was not yet permitted, and the destruction of a poor animal, without a positive injunction, would have been an act of unwarrantable cruelty, and certainly not the natural or likely mode of a peace-offering. The patriarchs, like our modern deists, might indeed have dreamed of some unknown, and therefore uncertain, mercy in the Almighty; but they never could have imagined, without an express and positive revelation, that by shedding the blood of beasts they typically shewed forth the everlasting sacrifice that was to atone for man's transgression. Yet, without this

* Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 42.

view, their sacrifices (could they even have invented them) would have been nugatory ceremonies, and equal violations of reason and nature. Nay, sacrifices without an allusion to Christ, or not slain in faith in his great propitiation, (which was only to be done in a manner appointed) were expressly forbidden under the law, upon this penalty, that blood should be imputed unto that man who should offer them. *He hath shed blood, that man shall be cut off from among his people.*—Levit. xvii. 4.*

PAGE 48, LINE 14.

To the exceptions that may be made to the Mosaic account of the deluge, we can oppose the present state of the earth.

PERHAPS, upon no subject more than this, has the ingenuity of man been exercised, or his mind led away from plain matter of fact into curious and barren speculation, till the storehouse of Nature, wherein is deposited every thing for his comfort and convenience, has been literally made by him the storehouse of infidelity. The truth, however, which he rejected, and the absurdities which he has in consequence embraced, have terminated, where the rejection of the word of GOD will ever end, in the destruc-

* Vide "Horæ Solitariæ," p. 461. And for a full and clear elucidation of this great truth, vide "Letter to the Rev. D. Vincent, on the subject of Sacrifice," by the Rev. W. Jones.

tion of all belief; and if any extraneous circumstance were wanting to fix our faith upon the bible records, the efforts which were made to impair the credit of the Mosaic history, to prepare the mind for the renunciation of every other part of Christianity, are in their progress and effects now before us. But let us hope, that the wild conceits and contradictory assertions of a Buffon, converted by a set of antichristian conspirators into an engine of deadly mischief, with all the subordinate helps* and blasphemous paradoxes of sophism, have now done their fatal work; and that the eyes of their sadly-deluded followers are many of them opened to see the precipice to which they are hastening, and from which so many of their fellow-citizens have fallen. To the indefatigable labours of Mr. De Luc, to the uniform and unceasing employment of his time and talents, to what he *has done*, and to what he is *now doing*, may be attributed much of that change of opinion, which seems now to be operating on the human mind.† To many other works of great eminence are

* To those who wish to see the whole of this systematic Philosophy of Nature against Revelation detailed and ridiculed with as much wit, in the defence of religion, as was ever employed by its most acute adversaries against it, I would recommend a work, written by the Abbé Baruel, under the title of "Les Lettres Helviennes," and to which he frequently alludes in his celebrated Memoirs.

† We speak this in some measure on the credit of much private information from the Continent; but we have also an extraordinary document before us, not long since published in the "Journal Général de France." The writer of the article in question sets out with a

we also indebted for a manly defence of the bible truths; more particularly at this period, to Mr. King, in his "Morsels of Criticism;" to Mr. Howard, in his "Thoughts on the Structure of this Globe;" and to Mr. Kirwan, (to quote him again) in his "Geological Essays." I can-

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prediction of one of their famous preachers, the Jesuit Neuville, soon after the appearances and the popularity of the "Système de la "Nature," who thus expresses himself:—

"O religion sainte de Jesus Christ! ô trône de nos rois! ô "France! ô patrie! ne fût-ce pas comme chrétien, je gemirois "comme citoyen; je ne cesserois point de pleurer les outrages par "lesquels on ose vous insulter, et la triste destinée qu'on vous "prepare. Qu'ils continuent de s'étendre et de s'affermir ces "affreux systèmes, leur poison devorant ne tardera pas à consumer "les principes, l'appui, le soutien nécessaire et essentiel de l'état "—Dès-lors, dans le plus puissant empire, il faudra que tout croule, "que tout s'affaisse, que tout s'anéantisse: pour le détruire, il ne "sera pas besoin que Dieu déploie sa foudre et son tonnere, le ciel "pourra se reposer sur la terre du soin de le venger et de la punir. "Entraîné par le vertige et le delire de la nation, l'état tombera, "se précipitera dans un abîme d'anarchie, de confusion, de sommeil, "de décadence, et de dépérissement."

After this eloquent harangue, the writer's observations are as follow:

"Dieu ne plaise qu'une si funeste prediction s'accomplisse jamais "à la lettre: nous aimons à croire, que nous en serons quittes pour la "peur, et que les François, à la vue de l'abime qui est déjà ouvert "devant eux, rétrograderont avec effroi, et s'indigneront contre "l'impiété qui les y pousse. Parlons clairement: aimons à croire "que l'athéisme cessera bientôt de lever sa tête hideuse dans toute "la France; aimons à croire, que ceux qui gouvernent, au lieu de "paroitre tolerer seulement la religion par commiseration pour la "foiblesse du peuple, la protégeront hautement par la conviction de "sa vérité et de sa necessité; aimons à croire, qu'ayant pris pour

not also pass over a work now, perhaps, little known, but combating, with great success in its day, a formidable opposition to the Mosaic records, a "Treatise on the Deluge," by the Rev. A. Calcott. Mr. Brydone, whom we must consider rather as the tale-bearer of infidelity, than its bold and avowed partizan, has received his Christian rebuke from the pen of the most ingenious and pious Mr. Gisborne.* Might I be allowed to hint a small objection to some of the above-mentioned writers, it would be for adopting some sort of system of their own, and for not stedfastly adhering to the proofs the earth affords of

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" modéle les Etats-Unis dans la tolérance de toutes les religions, " comme les mêmes Etats, ils refuseront, je ne dis pas seulement " la protection, mais la tolérance même à l'athéisme et au maté- " rialisme ; aimons à croire, qu'ils ne souffriront point que le peuple " François offre plus long-temps un spectacle infiniment odieux, " sans exemple dans tous les siècles; je veux dire le spectacle d'un " peuple sans religion: enfin, aimons à croire, qu'ils ne permettront " pas que nous tombions dans un état qui nous feroit justement re- " greter le Paganisme.

" Mais si le gouvernement s'endort sur les dangers qui menacent " si prochainement l'état d'une subversion totale, s'il perséveroit " dans son indifférence pour la religion, (des malveillans diroient " dans son mépris et dans sa haine) c'est un motif de plus à tous les " François qui aiment sincèrement leur patrie, de redoubler de vi- " gilance pour la conservation des principes religieux, et de remplir " avec plus de zèle, chacun dans sa partie et suivant la mesure de " ses talens, l'office de defenseur de la religion, que la qualité de " citoyen, aussi bien que celle de chrétien, nous impose."

* Vide note to his last most admirable publication on the Christian Religion, p. 562.

an universal deluge. Perhaps they could not all be collected into a narrower compass, and with a finer allusion to their Christian issue, than in the passage which, on that account, I cannot forbear laying before the reader:

"All the phænomena of nature speak some religious "truth to those who have ears to hear their voice. When "we say this, we do not deny that volcanos may have a "natural use in purging the earth and giving vent to com- "bustible principles, which, if wholly confined, might "shake and shatter the earth to pieces before the time. "These things are very consistent, because the wisdom of "GOD works for many different ends by the same means.

"A review of the earth and its contents, however "short and imperfect, must inspire us with an awful "sense of the Divine power and wisdom. But we are "not to stop there; the natural history of the earth bears "an unanswerable testimony to the truth of revelation; "and we should never fail to apply it to that purpose, "when an opportunity offers. The scripture, which tells "us that this earth, on which we live, is now under sen- "tence to be destroyed by fire, doth also teach us, that it "hath been once destroyed already by water; of which "destruction the earth still bears such evident marks, "that the belief of it is as obvious to every observer of "nature, as it is necessary to a Christian. From the "surface of the earth we understand, that the whole was "once under water; which descended, with an accele- "rated velocity, from the land to the seas, toward which

" all the furrows of the earth are directed, and in which " they terminate. Then, if we search under the earth, " we find, that as man is not in the state in which GOD " first made him, but fallen into disorder and sinfulness; " so the earth has undergone some natural revolution, " which, in part, dissolved its substance, and lodged " within it such bodies as must have been the remains of " a former earth, because they could not possibly be the " productions of the present. Bones of animals, shells " of fishes, fruits of trees, are found buried at all depths, " and even in the midst of the hardest stone and marble. " Whence we are to argue, 1. That these bodies were " transported and deposited by a flood of waters; because " most of them belonged to the sea. 2. That the matter " of the earth must have been in a state of solution when " this happened; because it could not otherwise have in- " closed sea shells, and filled up their cavities through the " smallest apertures. 3. That the flood was *general*, " or common to the *whole world;* because these monu- " ments of it are found in all countries of the earth; on " the highest mountain, and in tracts most remote from " the sea.

" To account for a disorderly situation of things, out of " their several places, under ground, we must apply to " *water* or to *fire*, which two are the causes of all the " changes in this globe. We cannot apply to subter- " raneous fire, because here is an effect which is univer- " sal, and subterraneous fire is a cause but partial and

" occasional; the marks of which, when compared with " those of water, are but of small extent.* Besides, fire " would have destroyed bodies which water preserved; " such as the tenderest shells, the skins of scaly fish, the " fruits and leaves of vegetables. All these would bear " drowning and burying, but could never survive the de- " vastations of fire. How could fire transport the pro- " ductions of all climates into one place? But if they " floated on water, subject to winds, tides, and currents, " such a thing might easily be; accordingly, we find the " fruits of the East and West-Indies; bones, teeth, and " shells from fish of different seas; the elephant of Africa, " the tortoise of America, all near to one another in the " same spot,† as if laid up for a testimony to the truth of " the holy scripture, which alone gives us a faithful ac- " count of this great revolution in nature. When we " are informed, that the earth we now inhabit is the " *burying-place* of a former earth, it is as reasonable " that we should dig up the remains and ruins of it, as " that we should find the bones and coffins of former " generations in the earth of a church-yard."‡

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* " The effects of fire, compared with those of water, may per- " haps be nearly in the same proportion, as the forge of the smith, " with its slags and cinders, when compared with the lands of the " whole parish."

† " What is here said is verified in the island of Sheepy, in Kent."

‡ Again the Rev. Mr. Jones, in his 5th sermon on the Earth and its Minerals.

PAGE 50, LINE 18.

And the typical history of Abraham, &c.

A beautiful illustration of this idea will be found in Mr. Jones's "Reflections on the Life, the Death, and Burial of the Patriarchs."

PAGE 51, LINE 9.

I am the Almighty GOD.

LET the reader compare this passage in Genesis, chap. xvii. 1. with a subsequent one in chap. xxi. 33. *Abraham*, it is stated, *planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the* LORD, *the Everlasting* GOD. Now, if no man could see GOD and live, and if a being became visible to man, and called himself *the Almighty* GOD, must we not allow a *distinction* of person in *an unity of essence* under the *patriarchal* covenant. Besides, this very expression, with various others, *Who is* GOD, *save the* LORD—*the* LORD *he is the* GOD, &c. if the terms had no *particular distinct* sense, would be an unmeaning, if not absurd, tautology. I believe this remark belongs to the excellent author of "Horæ Solitariæ," but I find it in a marginal note of my bible, without a reference.*

* Vide Alix also, p. 203.

SERMON III.

It is with pride, though painful remembrance, that I attribute the form and manner of treating this subject to some notes of the late Bishop of Norwich. Could he have left his spirit with them, it had, indeed, been a legacy to the Christian world, which, at his death, was robbed of one of its brightest ornaments. I could almost say, as Cicero did of Archias—*Si quid est in me ingenii, quod sentio quam sit exiguum*, I owe that little to his friendship, his conversation, and writings.

PAGE 72, LINE 20.

Though the elements be dissolved with fervent heat, &c.

Once more Mr. Jones—who for ever makes philosophy the handmaid of religion, and who, in his "Natural Evidences of Christianity," thus supplies an answer to every doubt about the event:—"The destruction of the "world by fire is the last doctrine I shall take occasion to "speak of; which, though never unreasonable, and ad-"mitted even by heathens of old time, is now more ap-"parent than ever, from the late improvements in experi-"mental philosophy. Indeed we may say, the world is "already on fire; for as Sinai, with its smoke and flame, "was a positive, so is every volcano a natural, prelude to

" the burning of the last day. The earth, the air, the " clouds, the sea are all replete with a subtile penetrating " fire, which, while at rest, is neither felt nor observed, " and was absolutely unknown to some of the most learned " for ages; till accidental discovery hath now laid open " the treasures of fire in heaven and earth, to all that " have the use of their sight and senses. The publication " of the philosophy of fire hath been so sudden and so " universal, and is so wonderful in itself, that it seems to " be second to the publication of the Gospel; at least " there is no event in philosophy or literature that comes " near to it.

" In this element we live and move; and, perhaps, so " far as our frame is mechanical, we are moved by it. " When excited to action, it turns into a consuming fire, " which no substance can exclude, no force can resist. " The matter of lightning, which seems to break out " partially and accidentally, is now found to be constitu- " tional and universal in the system of nature; so that the " heavens, which, according to the language of the scrip- " ture, are to *melt with fervent heat,* want no foreign " matter to convert them into fire. What is called " *phlogiston,* can rise in a moment from a state of quies- " cence to a state of inflammation; and it discovers itself " in many bodies where we little expect to find it. The " earth, and the works that are therein, carry with them " the seeds of their own destruction; and may be burnt

" up by that element which now resides within them, " and is only waiting for the word from its Creator."*

PAGE 89, LINE 2.

Infidelity may deny the fact, but it cannot get rid of the evidence, &c.

VIDE " Reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scripture, to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion," by P. Alix; in the second volume of the Bishop of Llandaff's Theological Tracts. Compare the tract also with the rules down by that learned and sagacious divine, Mr. Leslie, for the distinguishing truth from falsehood, in his " Short and easy Method with the Deists," lately published by desire of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 6, et seq.

PAGE 92, LINE 18.

When they ignorantly crucified, &c.

VIDE this argument admirably managed by Mr. Whitaker, in his " Origin of Arianism," the force of whose expressions, in one or two instances, I have not scrupled to adopt.

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* Jones's Lectures, p. 441, &c.

PAGE 116, LINE 12.

In the language of one of them, &c.

VIDE "Scriptural Confutation of the Arguments against the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, produced by the Rev. Mr. Lindsey, in his late Apology," by William Burgh, esq; ch. i. p. 13, et seq. If I have noticed this work in preference to many others, wherein the distinct provinces of reason and faith may be as clearly and accurately defined, it is with the view of recommending to the perusal of every Christian brother a book, that for depth of research and solidity of argument, for its piety, moderation, and firmness, was never surpassed in any age or in any country. I scruple not to call the *Confutation of Mr. Lindsey*, with the subsequent enquiry by the same author, *into the belief of the Christians of the first three centuries*, the most full and compleat refutation of error that ever graced the annals, or confirmed the doctrines, of Christianity.

PAGE 136, LINE 14.

They were to be welcomed by an innumerable company of angels.

THE reader will find this subject treated in the most interesting and peculiar manner in a sermon of Dr. Horne's.—Vol. iv. Disc. 14. *All the angels stood round about the throne.*

PAGE 150, LINE 4.

So far as the kingdom, &c.

Edwards on Redemption.

PAGE 178.

We would refer the reader to a sermon of Dr. Rotheram's, on the Wisdom of Providence in the Administration of the World.

Cruttwell, Printer, Bath.